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MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE.

AUGUST, 1895.

THE OLD ONE-HORNED STAG.

HE was dropped, as we reckon, early in the month of June, about the year 1874, probably in some quiet retreat under the oak coppice of Horner Wood, or it may have been in some shady combe full of grass and fern on Brendon Common. Who shall presume, unless by rare chance he may have assisted at the ceremony, to name the day and place of birth of a wild red deer? Yet if the knowledge of the ways of deer be not vain, and all experience of teeth and head and slot be not at fault, our conjecture will not lead us very far from the truth. So he came into the world, a downy-haired, white-spotted little red-deer calf, with four rather long legs and two rather large ears, and looked about him with two great beautiful eyes, and saw his heritage of Exmoor before him, fold upon fold of grass and heather with the shadows of the clouds coursing over it, bounded on the one hand by the blue sky and on the other by the blue sea. A peaceful, happy world it must have seemed to him in those early months, singularly full for the moment of heedless young creatures like himself. Now he would see an old vixen with her cubs around her playing merrily, as only fox-cubs can play, and hunting distracted beetles among the stones; now a sober old gray hen, much cumbered with the cares of maternity, watching anxiously over her brood of little pouls; now a bloodthirsty old weasel with two

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couple of young weasels behind her, all hurrying forward with little short legs and long lithe bodies on the line of some hapless rabbit, and speaking joyfully to the scent as they ran. Sometimes, when walking leisurely among the burning stones on the sunny combe side, his dam would stop and swerve and stamp, and lay back her ears and look fierce, and he would see the old mother viper open her hideous wicked jaws, and the little vipers rush down her throat to their haven of refuge. Nay, even when she took him with her to the brown peat stream the trout-fry dashed away from the shallows before him, and he could watch them scurrying from stone to stone, half in fright and half in play. For all the world was young in those days, and all the young, except the trout, seemed to have a kind mother to look after them.

So passed the long bright midsummer days. The sun came up over Dunkery, and the light flew away on the wings of the morning along the Severn Sea to the Atlantic, and the warm wind sang through the waving grass and the stiff stubborn heather, and made the music of the moor. And the calf grew and waxed stronger and began to see others of his kind, other hinds like his own loving dam, with other calves like unto himself. And with these calves he could play, frisking and gambolling and pretending to fight; nor could he fail to note

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that some would submit to him at once, while others would butt and push and worry with great enjoyment. Now and again he would see a huge old stag, his head half grown and the velvet black with flies, stamping and twitching and wincing under his tiny tormentors, in piteous anxiety for the safety of the young tender horn. And our calf, too, whisked his little ears and tossed his little head with great dignity, and stretched himself lazily when he rose from his bed as he had seen the old stags do ; for he, too, meant to grow into a great stag one day, and it is always good to be of the male sex. Then his attention would be distracted by a shrill whistle overhead, and he would be aware of a pair of curlews sailing high in air, with their long bills cut clear against the blue sky, reminding him of the herons that he had seen in Badgworthy Water. Then another bird would cross his view, a little speck with wings that fluttered and paused and fluttered and paused ; and he wondered why the old gray hen, with whom he had been on most friendly terms, now cut him dead, having no eyes but for the speck above her, while the poult hid themselves away in abject terror.

One day he was startled from his play by an unusually sharp bleat from his mother, who came galloping in haste to meet him, and kept watching a mass of something white that was moving over the heather across the combe a mile away. Never had he seen her so much disturbed ; and he felt uneasy too, though he hardly knew why, and as they moved upward towards them his nostrils caught a new strange scent which some instinct within him bade him take note of. The mass kept closely and compactly together until it reached the spot where he remembered to have passed in the morning, and then he saw a man on a horse gallop forward, and

faintly heard a shrill yelp that made his dam quiver all over. She was doubly thoughtful and affectionate for the rest of the day, and that night they travelled further than they had ever travelled yet, away to the south and west, and found a resting-place where few even of their own kind ever visited them. But there were thoughtful heads among the moving white mass of hounds also. Fisherman and Reveller and Nemesis and other gray-muzzled veterans were rejoicing that those tiresome, idiotic puppies had at last learned to follow the pack without being coupled to them ; and Chorister, still smarting under the lash, was bewailing his hard lot and wondering why, now that he was entering upon his second season, he could not be allowed a free hand. He had been hunting hinds strenuously all the winter ; why should he now be punished for feathering on the stale line of a hind and calf ?

So the summer wore on, and August came in with bursts of westerly wind and mist and rain. And the water sank rustling into the turf and dripped from the ragged edges of the peat basin in a rich brown clear stream. The trout felt it and rejoiced, and the salmon rushed up from the sea into the Lyn ; but the hind and her calf rested peacefully in the shade of the oak coppice, and when they moved he watched her rear up to pluck some dainty piece of ivy or the red berries of the mountain-ash, and nuzzled at the fragments between her lips and pretended to enjoy them immensely. But one fine day, very early in the morning, just when they were settling down to be comfortable for the day, there came the sound of many hounds raising a terrible clamour, and they rose and moved up from the covert to the open. And after a time out came one of the fox-cubs that they had known on the moor, his tongue lolling

and his back crooked, as though he began to tire. He went up as if he would have gone away over the moor, but presently stopped and flounced back with desperation into the covert ; and the hind trotted gently away, anxious but not alarmed. "They are not after us, my son," she gave the calf to understand ; and presently out came the hounds furiously on the line of the cub and flashed over the scent for fifty yards. Then the clamour died away and they spread out in all directions ; and two wild puppies, catching the line of the hind and calf, lifted up their voices and began to run on. The rest had cast back, and, recovering the line of the cub, disappeared with a chorus into the oak-coppice ; but the two puppies, rejoicing in a stronger scent, ran on, and hind and calf fled before them. The calf's poor little legs were beginning to weary when he found himself poked down quick as thought into a tuft of fern by his dam's nose. "Lie there, my son, till I come back to you," was her order ; and there he lay, helpless and alone.

Closer and closer came the puppies, loudly throwing their foolish tongues, and thinking themselves immensely clever ; but they missed his hiding-place and passed beyond him, though he did not know that his dam had waited for them on purpose to lead them after herself. Presently came the brushing of a horse's hoofs through the heather, and a mounted man galloped almost on to the top of him. He saw the horse swerve and heard the man's exclamation of surprise, but he lay still as he had been bidden. Then the dull drum of hoofs died away, and after a time a melancholy yelping, such as he had once heard before, was borne to his ears, and he again perceived the approach of horses. Then there was a noise of human voices. "Where did you say she had left her calf, Tom ?" "Straight afore

you, sir, about ten landyard on, where you see the veearn." Then two horses came closer, and a girl's voice said : "What a little duck ! I wish I could take him home." And a man's voice answered : "His mother will come and take him home presently, and the sooner we are gone the better she will be pleased." So the girl took a last regretful look, and they rode down into the covert ; and in the silence that followed he heard a roar of baying, and the shrill notes of a horn and hallooing from the valley, but he did not know that it meant that the cub was dead, and that the man who had so nearly galloped on to him was even then fastening the ghastly mask to his saddle.

Before very long, though it seemed very long to him, his dam came back and rejoiced over him. She was dripping all over, having taken a good bath at the end of her run ; and she led him quietly off for a little way over the heather, and then down a steep hill-side among stunted gorse and hot, loose stones. "No scent here, my son," was the lesson that she wished to teach, and he learned it once for all. Then, when they reached the water at the foot of the hill, she led him down the shallow for a little way, and jumped out on to the bank and followed it for a few yards ; and then she jumped in again and went up stream till they came to a comfortable shady spot ; and there they left the water and lay down together. On that night they did not return to their former place, but travelled till they came to the cliffs overhanging the sea, and made their home in the coverts there. But the place that they liked best was a large plantation of Scotch firs, so closely cropped by the wind and the salt that they ran along the ground almost like ivy.

One morning late in September, long after they had settled down for

the day, they heard continuous and increasing trampling of hoofs on the road half a mile above them, and a great chattering of human voices. It lasted for a long time, but they lay quite still, though the hind was evidently uneasy. Then they heard hounds speak in the covert below them, and there was a shrill halloo and much blowing of horns ; and presently there was a great clatter of branches close to them, and up came a huge old stag with his mouth wide open and his head thrown back. He jerked his head impatiently forward, as if to say "Be off at once," and the hind jumped up in terror and the calf after her ; and as they went they saw the old stag lie down in their place with his horns thrown back on his shoulders and his chin tight against the ground. But they had no time to lose, for the hounds were coming closer, and presently the hind led the calf on to a path, for his little legs could not keep up with hers in the tangle of the plantation, and there they ran on till they heard a horse trotting down the path towards them. Then they turned into the covert and lay down ; but the man hastened on along the path, looking hard at the ground, and meeting the hounds stopped them at once. "What is it, Arthur ?" said a man's voice. "Hind and calf, sir," said the man who had stopped the hounds, and then he blew a note on his horn and went away with the hounds, just three couple of them, at his heels.

"Hind and calf ?" said a girl's voice, the same that they had once heard before ; "I thought we were hunting a stag. We certainly found one." "Just so," answered the man, whose voice also was not strange ; "but the stag has turned up the hind and calf to be hunted instead of him." "Do they often do that ?" said the girl. "It's the commonest of all their

tricks, as you'll know when you have hunted them a little longer. They will turn out any deer that is weaker than themselves to take their place." "And a hind is always weaker, I suppose ?" continued the girl. "Naturally, for she is only about three-quarters of the size of a big stag." "Dear me," said the girl, "then the stags make the hinds do all their dirty work for them. I really had thought better of them. Stags are very like men, it seems," she added with a little sigh. "Yes, they are incomparably superior to the hinds," said the man gravely. "More strength, more beauty, and more brains." "I don't—" began the girl hotly, but the man held up his hand and said, "Hark ! what have they found now ?" Then the cry of hounds rose up again, and presently a hornless deer passed close to them, flying like an arrow from the bow. "There !" said the girl triumphantly, "that was a hind. Do you mean to tell me that she is not twice as handsome and graceful as a heavy, lumbering old stag ?" "Far more graceful, no doubt," said the man drily ; "but it happened to be a young male deer, as you might have judged by his neck and action, and I am going to stop the tufters from him," and he drew up his reins in his hand, for he had dismounted. "He's much nicer than the old stag, anyhow," persisted the girl with a touch of temper. "Stags cannot be very like men," said the man bitterly, as he swung himself into the saddle, "if the young ones are much nicer than the old ; but hinds are very like women, for it is well known that they prefer the old ones." And he looked at her rather sadly for a moment, before starting off abruptly at a gallop. "But I don't," said the girl, stretching out her hand as if to stop him. "I don't," she repeated, galloping after him at the top of her horse's speed ; and the voices died away.

But the hind and the calf lay still though they could hear men and hounds still wandering through the great covert, hunting for their lost stag. Then after a time there was another loud halloo which told them that he was afoot again, and when another half-hour was past there was a great clamour in the road above them, and all the horses seemed to be galloping to one spot. Then the hubbub died away and all was silent ; the old stag had been forced into the open at last, and was flying for his life over the heather. And presently the hind rose and led the calf out of the covert and on to the open moor, and, when they had crossed one valley and reached the top of the hill above, they could see a long line of horses, covering two or three miles, hastening on with what speed they could muster in the vain hope of catching the hounds. There they lay down in peace for two hours, and as the sun began to sink they saw the hounds, far away, returning quietly home ; and very weary the horses that were with them seemed to be. Then they heard voices much closer to them, and the hind started to her feet. It was the man and the girl that they had seen in the morning ; they were riding quite alone and very close together, and they seemed to have a great deal to say to each other. The pair drew nearer, and they heard the girl say : "He's not so very old, and you'll admit that he's very nice ; but how you can have thought that I really cared for him——" And the man looked about him, rather foolishly but very happy apparently, and changed the conversation by saying, "Look ! there's a hind and calf." And she said, "I believe you are a great deal fonder of the deer than you are of me ;" and so they passed on. And later on came a loose horse, all covered with mire, with one

stirrup missing from his saddle. And first he went down to the water to drink, and then he lay down and rolled over and over till the girths parted with a crack and left the saddle on the ground ; then he got up, hung up one hind-leg in the rein and kicked himself free, and then he lay down once more and rubbed his cheeks against the heather till he had forced the bridle off his head, and at last, apparently quite comfortable, he began to graze. And some time after him came a man, also covered all over with mire, tramping wearily through the heather in breeches and boots, with his spurs in his hand ; and he stumbled over a tussock of grass and nearly fell on his nose. And they heard him curse the moor as a place abandoned of Providence and wish that he had never set eyes on it ; and then he, too, passed on, and so closed an eventful day.

After another week or so, as October came in, the stillness of the night was broken by hideous roars, at first in a few places only, but soon from all sides, and all the deer in the forest seemed to be incurably restless. The great stags seemed never to cease belling except when they were cooling themselves in the water or taking a mud bath, and if two of them met they fought furiously. Their necks were swelled and their bodies tucked up, so that they looked very different from the sleek, fat creatures that had been seen in the coverts in the summer. And one would form a little band of hinds to himself and drive them about like sheep, and another, perhaps some impudent three-year-old, would try to steal one of them away till the old stag came down upon him in all his wrath and drove him to fly for his life. The calf felt very much afraid of the old stags at this time, but his mother took care to keep him out of their way. After two or three

weeks of this troubled life, the deer seemed to agree to live in peace again, and they drew together in great herds, so that sometimes there would be two or three score of them on Dunkery alone.

And now the autumn gales set in and blew furiously from the Atlantic over the moor ; and the calf grew stronger and stronger, and noted with pride that the white spots which had dotted his summer coat had disappeared, and that he was now a veritable red deer. Week after week he lay with his dam in the warm sheltered combes of Dunkery, and listened to the gale hunting the scud overhead, and the water roaring down from the bog to the sea. On very rough days there was always plenty of company in these combes, for a fox would often come in and make himself comfortable therein, and occasionally a hare, and all seemed to be equally fond of the place. But there was little rest, for the hounds ran over Dunkery from all parts of the moor regularly week after week, and many a time the hind and calf were forced to fly before them, sometimes alone and sometimes with others. And they had narrow escapes, too, for they were hard pressed more than once, and at last in January there came a day when they were forced to part from each other, and run their own ways. Worse than that, the pack divided after them, and some of the old hounds, knowing that a calf was more easily tired than a hind, chased him their hardest. He ran gallantly for more than half an hour in and about the large wooded valleys, but the scent was good and the pace so great that he dared not pause for a drink and a splash in the water ; and though he beat up one little stream for a few yards he soon left it, for he heard the hounds close to him. Then he made a final effort, and

climbing up one hillside and down another, sank the hill to the water below and lay down in despair. But chance was kind to him ; for just as the hounds were casting down the water after him, a man viewed him in the stream, and the hounds were stopped and laid on to another line.

Then the men came back and stood over him, and one said : "The pack is all over the place ; hadn't we better stow the little beggar away somewhere, or they'll kill him yet ?" And the other said, "Hold my horse, and I'll go in after him." And he did go in after him, but the calf was not so beat but that he scrambled up and made his escape down the water and into a hedge-trough, where he lay like a stone. All that day hounds were running round and round the great woods, and deer after deer, stags and hinds, came down the same water with a few hounds after them, until at last, as it grew dark, a tired man on a tired horse rode slowly up the valley blowing long notes on a horn and picking up couple after couple of the weary pack. But when night came on there was still a stray puppy mooning up and down the valley, howling dismally from time to time that he was lost and did not know his way home, until at length he licked himself dry, and came sniffing along the hedge-trough where the calf lay to look for a warm bed. And when he reached the calf he just stepped down and curled up alongside him ; and the two kept each other warm for the night.¹

Next day his dam found him, and she too seemed stiff and tired as though she had travelled far and fast on the previous day. They ran together many times before the hounds ere the hunting-season ceased ; but all things come to an end, and at last, in

¹ This is a literal fact ; the two were found in the position described.

March, the coverts were quiet and they could enjoy a peaceful life once more. Then the sun gathered strength and the thorns began to sprout and the mountain-ash to flower, and the woods were carpeted with wild hyacinth and primrose; and a little later the ash-boughs, laid along the hedgerows round the skirt of the moor, began to throw out buds, and every young male deer came to eat them, greedy for the delicacy. The calf saw some new sights also that spring, the gray hens in the centre of the ring, and the blackcock dancing solemnly round them to show what desirable mates they were. And at the last he felt a new sensation, a pain in his forehead, which became remarkably tender in one spot, and eventually threw out a single little knob of dark gray velvet on the near side. All the other yearlings that he saw had two, and he felt himself ill-used in having but one; but there the matter was, and not to be helped.

He still remained with his dam through that summer, and as she had no calf that year he had her still to himself; and by the time the winter was come he felt strong enough to lead the hounds a long dance before they should run up to him. But the day at last came when they were parted for ever. It was a mild gray November morning, and they were lying with half a dozen more of the herd in some dry grass tufts in the boggy ground of Brendon Common, when the hounds came up to find them, and two couple of tufters catching view raced after them as he had never known them race before. He went away in company with his dam and kept to her for two miles or more, though a man who was waiting for them tried hard to gallop in between them; but at last the hounds drove them so hard that they lost all thought of each other and turned

away in different directions. He galloped like the wind by the way that she had showed him towards the cliffs, and, when he came to the water, ran down and up as she had taught him; but he dared not linger long, and climbing up with all haste to the covert, startling the woodcocks out of their day-dreams, never paused till he reached the stunted oaks above the sea. Then he stopped, and, finding all quiet, enjoyed a drink and a splash in a little stream, and lay down determined to go straight to the sea if he were troubled again. But the hind made for Dunkery, and soon the whole pack was after her, flying at the top of their speed. She found four stags together at the hill, but they drove her away, and she toiled on alone, black with sweat; then her beautiful neck began to droop and her feet to falter, and presently she sank the hill for Horner Water, which she never left again alive. But the yearling knew nothing of all this; he knew only that he never saw her again, and he did not care, for now he had grown a horn and could take care of himself.

Then another spring came round, and the little horn on his forehead dropped off; it was rather painful, but the pain was soon over; and in its stead there grew up a slender spire with two points, brow and trey, upon it. A great to-do he made when the horn was full grown and the time came for fraying off the velvet; he chose a young ash tree, and went round and round it rubbing and burnishing till he fairly cut all the bark off, and left the tree to die. But it was a great disadvantage to have but one horn, for all the deer that had two made a point of bullying him whenever they met him. They turned him out and made him run for them again and again, and in October, when he thought of choosing

a wife, they drove him off with ease. Next year things were just the same. He was too young to be hunted, but he was constantly obliged to run for others, until at last he grew so cunning, in baffling the hounds and in hiding himself from other deer, that it was a hard matter for either to find him. When October came he did not stay long to fight with the others, but stole away a single hind from the herd as his companion, and took her away to the distant covert where he had lived as a calf. Still regularly as October came round he went back to Dunkery for the winter and joined the herd there.

And as the years passed on he grew into a great stag. He never bore more than a single horn, and that never very big nor heavy, but he was none the less a fine deer and could hold his own with the young ones at any rate. He was cunning too, and could hide himself away so that no hound could find him, in odd ledges in the cliff, or in some patch of gorse so thick that no hound would face it. And he never walked into his lair, but stood at a distance and hurled himself into it with one great bound so as to leave no scent behind him, and lay like a stone. So for season after season he escaped all trouble from the hounds. And as time went on he discovered how to take advantage of his one horn: for one day when he was shoving head to head with all his might against another stag, he slipped aside and gave his enemy such a thrust in the flank that the other was glad to run away limping and bleeding and fairly beat. And then he threw up his head and bellowed loudly in triumph.

It was not until he was fully eight years old that he found the pack after him again. It was in October, the last day of the season, that they found him, and a long chase he led them. For, starting from the foot of

Dunkery, he made straight for the distant home of his calfhood, fourteen miles away. The hounds did not get away very close to him, and he felt as if he could run on for ever, old as he was. So away he went over grass and heather eight miles, before he dreamed of touching the water, and, rising up refreshed after a short bath, cantered on in the teeth of the westerly breeze confident as ever. As he went he caught the wind of a herd of hinds lying on the common, and ran straight into the middle of them; and up they rose, hinds with calves in terrible alarm, wondering what was going to happen. Then the hounds came up to them and scattered in all directions after the hinds, while he went on chuckling to himself, and having reached his refuge lay in the water till he felt quite cool and fresh, and curled up for the night as comfortable as could be.

Another year passed; October came again, and again he was in Dunkery among the herd. He went down to the fields to feed, and came back to a little brake on the hill-side, a favourite place with all deer, and known as Sweetworthy, the sweet meadow; he walked quietly up to a patch of gorse, jumped into the middle of it and lay down to sleep. Nor was he conscious of the presence, a little before dawn, of a man who came creeping up to windward of him and noted the slot of his great feet leading into the brake but not out of it. The hounds came to Cloutsham, straight across the valley from him, at eleven o'clock, and a number of people to meet them, for it was the last day of the stag-hunting season. And the man who had crept round the brake went apart with the master, and said very quietly: "In Sweetworthy, my lord—a good stag. I'm so sure that I would make a bet to find him myself." And the other said,

"That's good, Miles." And presently the pair of them rode across the valley with the huntsman and two couple of hounds.

The One-Horned Stag heard them coming, but he only lay the closer. The hounds were laid on to the line by which he had passed five or six hours before and hunted it slowly towards him, nearer, nearer, till at last they came right up to his bed, and bayed with fierce triumph as he jumped up before them. He made three bounds through the gorse thicket and came right upon a man who yelled *tally-ho!* in his face and blew his horn so fiercely that he waited no longer but dashed down the steep wooded combe and over Cloutsham Ball to the valley that leads to the forest. And as he reached the bottom he heard the whole pack upon his trail and knew that the worst had come. Two miles he galloped straight up the valley to its head, the hounds flying after him and a hundred horsemen in their wake, and then he climbed gallantly up the head of the combe, topped the bank above it, and pointed straight over the open moor for the distant home of his calfhood. He felt the cool wind in his face, and ran gallantly on; but the hounds were close behind him, and he could gain little on them. On and on he galloped, not daring to linger to soil in the cool brown stream till he left the heather for the grass of the forest. Then for the first time he ran up the small thread of water, but he had been in it only a very few minutes when the hounds came over the hill, and he knew that he must fly once more. On they came to the water without faltering,—there were not a dozen horsemen with them now—flung down to the water and cast themselves

upward. Then at last their pace slackened for a moment, but presently Telegram ran slowly up the bank, holding the line truly though it was still weak from water, and Foreman pressed forward to hold it with him. And then they opened their mouths and spoke, and the One-Horned Stag heard them, and his heart died within him.

Still he toiled gallantly on over the yellow grass of the North Forest, breasting the long ascent to southward that lay between him and his refuge. Could he only reach the top, he would be able to hold his own yet; but struggle as he might the hounds gained on him, till just short of the top he turned back in despair, for they were hardly out of view. Wheeling on the line like a squadron of drilled horse, they raced down the slope as they had raced up it; and the old hounds came bounding to the front, for they knew that the end was at hand. Two miles they raced to the water at the bottom, and there the deer stood before them. Then they raised an exulting cry, and with one rush they swept him off his legs, and his head sank down below the water; but before they could harm him further the knife did its work, and the brown stream ran foul and reddened with his blood.

The one horn still hangs in a Devonshire home among the heads of Exmoor deer that died in the year of Waterloo; and those that see it look learnedly at the skull and discourse at length on the strange chance that left its growth imperfect. But there are a few that forget all else in the memory of that race over the moor, and ask if they will ever enjoy a better fifty-five minutes than the death-chase of the Old One-Horned Stag.

ANTARCTIC EXPLORATIONS.

IN his last annual address to the Royal Geographical Society Mr. Clements Markham, the President, referred to the efforts recently made by them, in conjunction with a committee of the Royal Society, to induce the Government to fit out an expedition for exploring in the Antarctic Ocean. For some years past there has been a good deal of spasmodic enthusiasm in favour of further researches, scientific and otherwise, in those higher southern latitudes which were in earlier days the scene of the exploring operations of Captain Cook, Sir James Ross, and a number of whalers among Englishmen, of Lieutenant Wilkes among Americans, of Captain Dumont D'Urville among Frenchmen, and of Captains Bellingshausen and Lazarew among Russians. This enthusiasm and the reasons which inspired it were well expressed in a paper read before the Royal Geographical Society in November, 1893, by Dr. John Murray, who took part in the *Challenger* expedition, and who is perhaps of all men living the one best qualified to direct our steps in this important direction. The immediate result of this paper was the formation of a committee, which included Dr. Murray himself, Sir Joseph Hooker (one of the two survivors of Ross's expedition of 1829-33), and Sir George Nares, the only living naval captain who has seen service in the Antarctic Ocean, for the purpose of considering and reporting upon the best means of increasing our scanty stock of knowledge concerning South Polar phenomena. This committee's report

was passed on to the Royal Society, which brought the weight of its great influence to bear in favour of the scheme, though unfortunately without the success which rewarded the analogous efforts of the British Association of the Royal Society fifty years ago, and which resulted in the commissioning of the *Erebus* and *Terror*. The Admiralty, with infinite protestations of sympathy towards the movement, regretted that it could not see its way just at present to meet the expense of an expedition commensurate with the objects in view and the honour of Great Britain. The public mind, which is not easily stirred by projects of which it does not fully understand the significance, is still somewhat lukewarm in the cause; and until there be something in the nature of an imperative call, it is very unlikely that the authorities will trouble themselves seriously about the matter. Possibly the appearance of some other country in the field might stir them. Lord Melbourne deserves our gratitude for his liberal treatment of Ross's expedition, and for the almost eager alacrity with which he adopted the proposals put before him; but possibly the fact that the United States and France were already in the Southern Ocean went some way towards influencing him in his decision.

When it is undertaken at all, it is desirable that the next Antarctic expedition should be a national one. Private enterprise, which has been splendidly active of late in the way of Arctic discovery, would scarcely be equal to all the demands of ex-

tensive and thorough Antarctic research. The work would extend over three or four years, and would involve, among many other things, the fitting out of two steam-vessels equipped with a vast amount of apparatus, in order properly (in Dr. Murray's words), "To determine the nature and extent of the Antarctic continent, to penetrate into the interior, to ascertain the depth and nature of the ice-cap, to observe the character of the underlying rocks and their fossils, to take magnetic and meteorological observations both at sea and on land, to observe the temperature of the ocean at all depths and seasons of the year, to take pendulum observations on land, to bore through the deposits on the floor of the ocean at certain points to ascertain the condition of the deeper layers, and to sound, trawl, dredge, and study the character and distribution of marine organisms." This is serious work; but it is not impossible, and it will have to be done if the next Antarctic expedition is to repay the cost of outfit.

Meantime it is interesting to note that merchant seamen, who have in the past contributed no small or unimportant additions to our knowledge of the Antarctic (as, for instance, in the remarkable achievements of Weddell and the Enderby whalers), are still busy. Last summer some Norwegian ships, which have been prosecuting the seal-fur industry in the region of the South Shetlands and Louis Philippe Land, and have been sufficiently successful to give hope of re-establishing this important trade in the South Seas, returned to Christiansand in Norway, their port of registry. The diary of Captain Larsen of the *Jason*, one of these vessels, makes a singularly interesting record, and if (as we understand is the case) it is intended to amplify it into a full volume, the result

ought to make a welcome addition to a department of literature by no means voluminous. The ships made the Falkland Islands their rendezvous for two seasons, transferring to the store-ship at Port Stanley their first season's catch, and emerging again after the winter to brave the ice and the storms of the frozen deep in the interests of science and of commerce. Dr. Murray regards Captain Larsen's discoveries as the most important in the Antarctic region since the time of Ross. For one thing, they have necessitated a certain alteration in the supposed configuration of the Southern continent so far as the outline of Graham's Land is concerned. During the early months of last year the sea in the neighbourhood of Joinville Island and Louis Philippe Land was sufficiently free of ice to allow the *Jason* to penetrate along the east side of Graham's Land to latitude $68^{\circ} 10'$ south and longitude 60° west; while one of her companions managed to reach latitude 69° south and further west. This means that the Norwegian whalers have got nearer to the South Pole than any steamer before them. Captain Larsen landed on Seymour Island and, in spite of deep valleys and high rocks, explored it for some distance. In the interior he found some dead seals, and penguins' nests innumerable almost as the many-twinkling smile of ocean. On the way south, land, described as rocky and as showing a high peak to the south-south-west, was seen on November 30th in latitude $66^{\circ} 4'$ south, longitude $59^{\circ} 49'$ west. On December 4th, in latitude 67° south, longitude 60° west, there was high snow-capped land in sight; and when the ship reached $68^{\circ} 10'$ south two days later, she found the ice of the low bay kind, and the weather warm and fine with comparatively little fog. On the return

to the north, Captain Larsen discovered some islands, two of which were actively volcanic, in latitude $65^{\circ} 7'$ south, longitude $58^{\circ} 22'$ west. The October number of the GEOGRAPHICAL JOURNAL contains a translation of such parts of Captain Larsen's log as relate to these discoveries. The following bearing upon Seymour's Island is especially notable: "The land is hilly and intersected by deep valleys. Some of the hills are conical and consist of sand, small gravel, and cement; here and there is some petrified wood. . . . When we were a quarter of a Norwegian mile from shore and stood about three hundred feet above the sea, the petrified wood became more and more frequent, and we took several specimens which looked as if they were of deciduous trees; the bark and branches, as also the year-rings, were seen in the logs which lay slantingly in the soil. The wood seemed not to have been thrown out of water; on the contrary, it could never have been in water, because in the first case, we found petrified worms, while there were none in the second. At other places we saw balls made of sand and cement resting upon pillars composed of the same constituents. We collected some fifty of them, and they had the appearance of having been made by man's hand."

These important discoveries made by vessels whose primary purpose in those regions was commercial,—though both the captains and the owner (Mr. Chr. Christensen, of Sandifjord, Norway) have shown extreme solicitude for the cause of science—give some earnest of what might be accomplished by an expedition specially fitted out for the work of research in Antarctic waters. It is satisfactory to know that from a commercial point of view also the expedition was successful. During

the second voyage the three vessels, the *Jason*, the *Hestha*, and the *Castor*, contrived to catch over sixteen thousand seals; and although there was a mishap on the Goodwin Sands on the voyage from the Falkland Islands to Norway, it is probable the results will induce Mr. Christensen to send his ships to the same region again. There is another Norwegian vessel, the *Antarctic* of Tonsberg, now there; but its attack is directed from another quarter, that south of Australia which has been always a favourite with explorers.

Much good work was also done by the Dundee whalers *Balena*, *Active*, *Diana*, and *Polar Star*, which set out in September, 1892, for whale-fishing in the south. The surgeons of the two first-named, Messrs. Bruce and Donald, were chosen for their scientific attainments, and they were well equipped with all the best instruments for observing the prevalent meteorological and other physical conditions, and for collecting all the specimens of natural history obtainable. The results of this voyage are to be found in a very entertaining volume, entitled **FROM EDINBURGH TO THE ANTARCTIC**, recently issued.¹ The return in blubber and whalebone was, unhappily, disappointingly small, and in that one respect alone the expedition may be said to have fallen short of its work; in all others, however, the experiment was successful, though it is matter for regret that, the scientific being subject to the commercial side of the undertaking, opportunity was not given for a longer stay in the south and for correspondingly further researches. Mr. Bruce tells us that the *Balena* was never within six miles of land,

¹ **FROM EDINBURGH TO THE ANTARCTIC**; by W. G. Burn Murdoch, artist, supplemented by the Science Notes of the Naturalists of the Expedition, W. S. Bruce, J. J. W. Campbell, and C. W. Donald, M.B.

save in the case of the Danger Islets. These islets were sighted on December 23rd, and between that date and the middle of July, the *Balena* circled roughly between latitude 62° south and 64° 10' south, and longitude 52° and 57° west, her westerly boundary being that part of Louis Philippe Land which forms Erebus and Terror Gulf, bounded to the southern extremity by Seymour Islands and to the north by Joinville Land. Such land as was encountered was completely snow-clad, except on the steepest slopes. Big icebergs were numerous, the highest seen being two hundred and fifty feet out of the water. They were most thickly distributed to the south-east of Danger Islets and sixty-five large bergs were counted from the deck at one time.

The sighting of Clarence Island, one of the South Shetland groups, brought to the mind of Dr. Donald fond recollections of the north. "The part sighted by us," he says, "lies only some sixty miles nearer the Pole than our own Northern Shetlands. But what a difference between the two places! Our own Shetlands bright with ladies dressed in light summer garments, and carrying tennis-racquets and parasols: the South Shetlands, even in the height of summer, clad in an almost complete covering of snow, only a steep cliff or bold rock standing out in deep contrast here and there, the only inhabitants being birds or seals; and even the bird-life, with the exception of penguins, is scanty." Here, again, is a description of the view which unfolded itself to the eyes of those on board the ships on December 23rd, while anchored to a large floe in latitude 64° 23' south, longitude, 56° 14' west, and with the mountains of Palmer's Land in the distance. "The scene," writes Dr Donald, "on this evening from the ship's deck was one of the most im-

pressive I ever witnessed. In the west lay this chain of snow-clad mountains thrown into various shades of light and dark by the low sun, with here and there the face of a cliff or black rock standing out in deep contrast to the surrounding snow. To the south the icefloe, studded with numerous small bergs and hummocks, stretched as far as the eye could reach; out to the eastward lay a long chain of bergs, their perpendicular faces tinged bright red by the sun's rays. Between these bergs and the floe lay an open expanse of dark water. To the north was the loose scattered ice, small bergs and dark water-channels through which we had just steamed. Throw over this the lilac glamour so frequently seen in the Antarctic, which, combined with the absolute stillness and quiet, broken only occasionally by the splash or the harsh *quangk* of a penguin, or the soft *tweet* of the snow-petrel, made up a magnificent and imposing spectacle."

It may be noted here that Dr. Donald attributes the marked difference of structure between the icebergs of the south and those of the north, to the different geological formation of the land in the two quarters,—that in the north being for the most part composed of water-bedded rocks, while in the south no rudimentary formations have been seen, and "therefore, as the geologist would explain, not conducive to the formation of deep ravines."

Prior to the date of Captain Cook's memorable voyages, the exploration of the higher southern latitudes was carried on very fitfully, and was left principally to the casual, and sometimes involuntary, efforts of the whale and seal-fisher and the adventurous merchantman. Without doubt very little was accomplished and very little was known about the Antarctic. And

even after Captain Cook nothing was done by any Government, save the Russian, for the study of South Polar phenomena until towards the end of the fourth decade of the present century. Between the year 1775, when Cook was last in the Antarctic, and the year 1840, when the expeditions of D'Urville, Wilkes, and Ross were there, only one man succeeded in penetrating to a point further south than Cook's farthest, and the primary purpose which took Weddell into that part of the world was the pursuit of the whale and the seal. Between the same dates no man but Bellingshausen succeeded in making any substantial addition to Cook's discoveries. Everything done in this direction down to Cook may be briefly stated.

Cape Horn was rounded for the first time in 1616 by a Dutch expedition, which had set out from Amsterdam in the *Hoorn* (or *Horn*) and the *Eendracht* (or *Unity*), to find a new western route to the East Indies, and so to evade the ordinance of the States-General prohibiting all Dutch ships, not engaged in the service of the Dutch East India Company, from passing by the Cape of Good Hope to the eastward, or through the Straits of Magellan to the westward. The *Hoorn* was burned at the entrance to the Straits of Magellan, and some of her timbers were found on the spot half a century later by Sir John Narborough, whom Charles the Second sent to Patagonia for gold. The other vessel pushed on, doubled and named the Horn after the lost ship (which had also received its name from the place of that name in Holland, of which one of the principals in the undertaking was a native), discovered and named (after the Amsterdam merchant who conceived the idea) the Straits of Le Maire, and finally reached the Pacific. Seventeen years earlier another Dutchman, Dirck Gerritz, in a vessel of only one hundred

and fifty tons, which formed part of the East India squadron of Simon of Cordes, had been driven by bad weather from the western entrance of the Straits of Magellan as far south as latitude 62° , and discovered the islands now known as the South Shetlands. To him it was a coast resembling that of Norway, mountainous and covered with snow. His statement was regarded as apocryphal until Mr. William Blyth, in the year 1819, re-discovered the islands while on a voyage from Monte Video to Valparaiso. The Dutch navigator, De Gonville, was credited with having, even before Gerritz, discovered a Terra Australis to the south of Africa; but we know from Pigafetta, the biographer of Magellan, that the phrase "Antarctic Pole" was a very loose one, and was taken to mean the southern hemisphere, which is a vastly different matter. Moreover, De Gonville brought home to France with him the son of the sovereign of his new-found land, which is of itself sufficient to prove that he did not penetrate far south; but his story, and the sight of his dusky captive, set the hearts of his countrymen beating with wild hopes for over a century and a half.

The philosophers said that a vast southern continent did exist, and must of necessity exist, in order to maintain the balance of the earth. One of the instructions given to the astronomer Halley (who was an officer in the navy), when despatched to the South Seas in 1699, was that he should endeavour to discover the unknown land supposed to be in the southern part of the Atlantic Ocean. It was mainly to search for this land, magnified by rumour into a country of vast extent and unlimited resources, that Ker-guelen in 1772 embarked on the voyage which led to the discovery of the islands that now bear his name. Heavy weather prevented him from

approaching close enough to examine the land; and so, rushing home, he gave a highly exaggerated account of his discovery, leading men to believe that the southern continent had at length been found. He was sent out again in the *Rolland*, and in December, 1773, was again driven off. Next month an officer from his companion frigate *L'Oiseau* managed to land, and he, in the name of France, took possession of the so-called Terra Australis with much formality and flourish. Almost at the very time that this pantomime was proceeding, Captain Cook, in the *Resolution*, and Captain Furneaux, in the *Adventure*, were sailing past the islands fifty miles to the south. On the very day that Kerguelen first sighted his islands (on January 13th, 1772,) M. Marion du Fresne discovered two islands lying between latitudes 40° and 47° south. He took them to be outlying islands of the great continent, and to signalise his hope that this might be so, he called one of them L'Ile de l'Espérance, or Hope Island; it is now known as Marion Island, and its neighbour as Prince Edward Island. It was not until the results of Cook's second expedition became known that the idea of a southern continent was abandoned, or rather very considerably modified. Many maps down to the end of the eighteenth century show a continuous stretch of land extending in an oblique line from Cape Horn almost as far north as the fortieth parallel. Cook himself, who was no better informed than the rest of mankind until he found out the truth for himself, was sent out to see if there really was a continent, and sailed with the assumption that there was. When he re-discovered South Georgia, he concluded, like du Fresne, that he had hit upon the skirts of this continent; but he did not immediately run home with the news. He sailed round the

islands and called one part Cape Disappointment, to give lasting expression to his chagrin. It was salve to his injured spirit to reflect that if the continent did really exist further south, and most men nowadays believe that it does, it was at any rate not worth discovering, to judge of the bulk by the sample before him in South Georgia. But even on the top of this reflection he turned the *Resolution*'s head to the east-south-east, and came very near to being wrecked on the still less inviting coast of Sandwich Land. The north-country collier was driving heavily before a strong breeze, with a thick fog enveloping everything and with a blinding sleet falling, when a momentary lifting of the fog showed land dead ahead at a distance of only three or four miles. Finding himself in this predicament, Cook hauled his wind to the north, but seeing it was impossible to weather the land in this quarter, he tacked in one hundred and seventy-five fathoms of water, a mile and a half from some breakers. He did not investigate this coast with any degree of minuteness. When he left he was unaware whether Sandwich Land was a group of islands, or part of the expected continent. The place, he said, lay so far south and was so very uninviting that knowledge concerning it was utterly futile.

The finding of the Sandwich group marked the virtual termination of Cook's labours in the remote southern seas. From these he turned his ship's head in the direction of the Cape of Good Hope, where he arrived on March 22nd, 1775. He had quitted that colony before (on his second great voyage) in company with the *Adventure* under Captain Furneaux, on November 22nd, 1772, in search of Bouvet's Land, had soon become separated from his consort, had spent one hundred and seventeen days in cruising up and down in an unsuccess-

ful search for this land, and for the other lands of which rumour spoke and of which he had heard from Baron Plattenburg, Governor of the Cape, and had experienced a taste of true Antarctic weather. He was at one time driven along by fierce gales that washed with their waves over the tops of icebergs sixty feet high ; and at another he lay ice-bound in the midst of squalls accompanied by snow, sleet, and drizzling rain that froze on the yards and sails as they fell, covered the whole ship with icicles, and made the sails as stiff as sheet-iron. The *Resolution* covered three thousand six hundred and sixty leagues without once coming into sight of land, left the meridian of Cape Circumcision a long way behind, and penetrated as far south as latitude $67^{\circ} 15'$ in longitude 40° east, with no company but that of albatrosses and petrels, and no variety from the monotony of sea and ice, with their attendant dangers and excitements, but the occasional spout of a whale in the distance and the still more occasional phenomenon of an Aurora Australis. The capers of the icebergs seem to have afforded some diversion. "The large pieces," we read, "which break from the ice-islands are much more dangerous than the islands themselves. The latter are so high out of the water that we can generally see them, unless the weather be very thick and dark, before we are very near them ; whereas the others cannot be seen in the night till they are under the ship's bows. These dangers were, however, now become so familiar to us that the apprehensions they caused were never of long duration, and were in some measure compensated both by the seasonable supplies of fresh water the ice-islands afforded us (without which we must have been greatly distressed), and also by their very romantic appearance, greatly

heightened by the foaming and lashing of the waves into the curious holes and caverns which are formed in many of them : the whole exhibiting a view which at once filled the mind with admiration and horror, and can only be described by the hand of an able painter."

The *Resolution* and the *Adventure* met at their appointed place of rendezvous, Queen Charlotte Sound, on May 18th, and spent some months cruising about the New Zealand coast and among the Society and Friendly Islands, during which they again became separated. On November 26th the *Resolution* rounded Cape Palliser on her way to the south alone, and her men spent Christmas in the thick of the ice, and next morning counted two hundred bergs in their neighbourhood. It was on this particular cruise that Cook reached his most southerly latitude of $71^{\circ} 10'$ in longitude $106^{\circ} 54'$ west, but otherwise the episode was uneventful. It was on January 29th, 1774, that, after picking his way for many days through the ice, with the usual round of strong gales, snow, and sleet, Cook found himself standing to the south in a region where there were few obstacles. Early next morning the clouds over the horizon before him presented an unusual degree of snow-white brightness, which was a sign of the proximity of field-ice. Shortly after the ice itself came into view from the mast-head, and by eight o'clock the ship was close to its edge. It extended east and west far beyond the reach of mere eyesight. The southern half of the horizon was illuminated by the light reflected from the ice to a great height. Ninety-seven ice-mountains were counted scattered over the field, and many loomed large as a ridge of mountains piled high one above another until they were lost in the clouds.

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Such was the scene that met Cook's eyes at the most southerly point he managed to reach. He saw it was impossible to penetrate further and turned to the north again; but so thick was the ice around his vessel that it was not until February 6th following that he contrived to bring her clear of it. In all he made three attacks on the South Pole, and it was during the third, when he changed his ground, that he came upon South Georgia and Sandwich Land.

Cook was wrong in surmising that no man would ever venture further than he had done. The Russians, who were in the Antarctic in 1821, and who discovered Peter the First Island and Alexander the First Island, returned home under the erroneous impression that they had beaten Cook on the strength of having reached the latitude of $70^{\circ} 30'$ south. They deserve credit for having first struck the Antarctic continent as we know it nowadays; but Weddell in the brig *Jane* of one hundred and sixty tons, with the cutter *Beaufoy* of sixty-five tons for company, contrived in 1822 to reach latitude $74^{\circ} 15'$ south in longitude $34^{\circ} 16'$, where open water was still found. Having regard to all the circumstances of the case,—the smallness of his vessels (one of them the merest cockleshell) and the lateness of the season,—this achievement of his ranks as one of the most remarkable in the annals of South Polar exploration, and one regrets to think that the man who accomplished it should have died at the last in poverty. He was desirous of penetrating still further south, but the wind and other conditions were against him; and no one who cares to remember that he had to pass homewards through a thousand miles of sea cumbered with ice-islands, and having before him the certainty of heavy weather, dense fogs, and

long nights, will be disposed to accuse him of having thrown away his chances.

Nor must one forget the splendid achievements of the Enderby whalers. Captain Biscoe in the brig *Tula*, in 1830-1, discovered Enderby Land, and further west the group of islands, the principal of which is now known by the discoverer's name. On January 7th, 1839, Captain Balleny in the schooner *Eliza Scott*, and Captain Freeman in the dandy-rigged cutter *Sabrina* of only fifty-four tons, left New Zealand, crossed Bellingshausen's track seventeen days later, and on February 1st reached a point two hundred and twenty miles south of the Russian explorer's furthest in this meridian. Later on, the pack-ice having compelled them to work to the north-west, the two sealers found themselves off a group of five islands in latitude 66° longitude 163° east, which figure on the maps as the Balleny Islands. On one of these, from the summit of which smoke was proceeding, Captain Freeman landed. Still later, after having passed along close to the land to which D'Urville in the following year gave the name of Terre Adélie by right of a supposed priority of discovery, the two vessels struck the continent, and the name of Sabrina Land stands as a record of their accomplishment. In this connection one must not neglect to recognise the fine spirit of Mr. C. Enderby, to whom, through the liberal instructions given to his captains, we owe so many important discoveries.

When the *Erebus* and *Terror* arrived at Hobart Town, Tasmania, on August 16th, 1840, Ross learned something of what had been accomplished immediately before by Captain Dumont D'Urville and his companions in the *Astrolabe* and the *Zélée*, and by Lieutenant Wilkes and his companions in the *Vincennes*, *Peacock*,

and *Porpoise*. The French expedition had struck the mainland on January 21st previously, had traced it in a continuous line for one hundred and fifty miles between the longitudes of 136° and 142° east in about the latitude of the Antarctic circle, and proceeding to the westward had sailed for sixty miles along a solid wall of ice one hundred and fifty feet high, which D'Urville, believing it to be a covering or crust of a more solid base, named Côte Clairée. The siege, so to speak, was raised on February 1st, because of the weakly condition of the crews of the two ships,—an unfortunate contingency which, it may be remarked, also took the American expedition off the ground long before its leader would otherwise have retreated. It does not detract in the least from the credit of D'Urville's discoveries that Balleny had a year earlier anticipated him in sighting Côte Clairée, the ice-barrier of which the latter took to be an immense iceberg, while the land beyond he mistook for clouds. No other expedition has done so much in seven weeks as did the French one under the gallant D'Urville.

Ross's expedition was the most successful of all ever undertaken in this region, but his ships spent three seasons in the Antarctic. The appearance of the two rival expeditions on the ground chosen and made public many months in advance for the scene of operations of the English ships, caused Ross to change his plans, and he accordingly selected a point much more to the eastward (170° east) from which to make his dash for the Pole. The meridian chosen was that in which Balleny had found open water in latitude 69° , and it was this fact that determined Ross in his choice of ground. He spent three successive seasons in the ice-pack, retiring northwards as the

winter approached, and turning his vessels' prows to the south again on the approach of spring. It would be impossible to indicate a tithe of the notable occurrences and discoveries of these three expeditions, and it is a great pity that Ross's own narrative, one of the most interesting records of one of the most interesting experiences ever gone through by any body of men, has never been republished for the benefit of a generation of readers unborn when the original edition was issued in 1847. The first of the three excursions was the most memorable. It was in this that the ships discovered and took possession of Victoria Land, sighted and named Mounts Erebus and Terror, besides many others of less altitude with the Parry Mountains in the background in latitude 79° south, and traced the ice-barrier in latitude 78° for two or three hundred miles. They had no lack of exciting incidents due to fogs, gales, snow-storms, and the proximity of loose bergs, to keep them from being bored by the unending stretch of an impenetrable wall two hundred feet out of the water. This was the barrier that guards the southern continent against mortal intruders. It was a perpendicular cliff, flat and level at the top, much higher than the mastheads of the ships, and without a single promontory, or a fissure even, along its seaward face. For three weeks the lonely ships picked their way along the barrier, driven off once or twice, but returning again and penetrating east through loose ice and large bergs, in snow, sleet, and biting cold, which froze the waves as they fell on the decks and rigging. On the way northward again it was at first thought possible to find a harbour where the party might winter, but this project had to be abandoned. Ross had already planted the English

flag on the north magnetic pole, and it was his keenest ambition to plant it on the south. His disappointment was all the greater because when he decided to return to open water, his vessels were in latitude $76^{\circ} 12'$ south and longitude 164° east, only one hundred and sixty miles from the magnetic pole; and had a place of security been found hereabouts in sight of Mount Erebus, both this interesting spot and the magnetic pole as well might easily have been reached by travelling parties in the spring.

The second excursion of the *Erebus* and *Terror* was made in the same region as the first, but was less productive of discoveries. Leaving Hobart Town on November 15th, 1841, the ships struck the pack-ice on December 18th, and were forty-six days forcing their way through from latitude 62° to latitude 68° . They spent some time running along the ice-barrier, the course of which

in the two voyages they traced for something like four hundred and fifty miles. The third excursion was made in a direction nearly opposite to that of the others; but in much the same region where Weddell penetrated to latitude 79° , the *Erebus* and *Terror* could not get beyond $71^{\circ} 30'$ because of the prevalence of ice and other difficulties. They finally reached the Cape of Good Hope on April 4th, 1843, after an absence of three years all but two days. From that time to this we have had no well-organised and well-directed expedition in the Antarctic Ocean, with the sole exception of the *Challenger*. The many pages in which are embodied the invaluable scientific results of her explorations in that quarter are an unanswerable argument for further researches in the same direction; and this fact is recognised by the leading custodians of our knowledge, who are unanimous on the pressing necessity for another expedition.

THE ROAD TO ROME.

I.

ALL roads lead to Rome. Some one made that remark about two thousand years ago, I fancy, and for once it was original. I can even believe that his auditors applauded its wit. Wit indeed it must have had, at least enough to keep it sweet through all the centuries that have swept by since. But to me it came with rather an insipid flavour when I was packing my modest boxes preparatory to taking a long holiday abroad.

Abroad ! that word of delightful vagueness, yet brimful of charm. What long vistas opened out before my mind's eye as I said it, vistas of beauty and pleasure, and new sensations of all kinds. My vision that had been bounded for many years by hospital walls,—whitewashed and clean, it is true, but echoing only the complaints of humanity and redolent of disinfectants—was soon to lose itself in the tangled light of green forests or amidst the bewildering foam and fret of Alpine cascades. "Six months abroad !" said my favourite niece to me, as she found me on my knees before my trunk. "Six months of real holiday after all your hard work ! Oh, Aunt Hannah, you must go to Rome ! "

"Not if I know it," said I ; and there came into my mind the stale flavour of Goldsmith's HISTORY, evanescent, it is true, but like all vapid things, dimming the pleasant savour of pine-woods and general foreign felicities that had gathered round me as I sorted my apparel, and planted my thickest boots firmly at the bottom of all things ; thinking only of when

I should take them out again, and the stony paths they would tread in the far off land of Tirol. "Not if I know it ; I am going to Germany," I added firmly, as I tucked a neat map of the Fatherland into the lid of my box, "and that is in quite a different direction, you are aware."

"All roads lead to Rome," said my niece with decision.

"Perhaps so, for those who wish to get there," retorted I ; "there is always a way for a will. But since I do not wish to see Rome, my will hews me a pleasanter path." For in those ignorant days I was a firm believer in the free-will of the divines, no less than in the liberty so characteristic of the English subject. Thereupon I locked my box with a snap, denoting a mind fully made up, and buckled my strap with an extra pull, as I reflected on the pleasure of doing exactly as I liked for some months to come. Then I directed a label in large letters of the nature of print, PASSENGER TO WIESBADEN, GERMANY ; for there was to be my first halt.

"Dear friend," said the kind German Frau, my hostess in that pleasant town, "I am going to spend the winter in Rome with gracious Lady von Reisewitz *geborene* Reichel. She is *dévote*, and will, in company of the high-worthy Herr Pfarrer Albertus, her chaplain, seek an interview with the Holy Father having reference to some matters of importance in her family. Will you not give us the pleasure of your company ? I go first

to visit a suffering child at Davos, and if you will accompany us there we can engage to meet Madame von Reisewitz a month hence, and journey to Italy all together, a party of four."

"Many thanks," I replied; "but I have no wish to see Rome, and a heretic Englishwoman would disturb the harmony of you good Catholics."

"Ah, no, dear Miss," was her fervent rejoinder. "Say not so! The Holy Virgin forebend that you should be reckoned among the ranks of the evil ones. See! In her love for one so devoted to good works she has arranged that the way to Rome shall be made easy for you. There are marvellous conversions known to take place in that City of Saints,—but I tease you not. A Sister of Charity, such as you, will at least come to Davos for the comfort of my sick child. And after that we will see. Heaven will guide our steps."

"To Davos, if you will," said I. "New places and new experiences are ever agreeable to me."

"Then why not to Italy?" said she.

Why? Because Rome is the capital of Italy; and what have I to do with the scarlet lady sitting on the seven hills? Was I not brought up in the faith that the Pope angles for England, and would bring back to her peaceful shores the horrors of the Inquisition? Have I not trembled in my childish cot, safe by father's and mother's bedside, as I thought of the wicked Jesuits who haled off to dark dungeons all those found reading the Bible? The terrors of childhood sink deep, and leave their mark on the adult. "No, never to Rome, the seat of iniquity," said I in my heart of hearts; but because my friend was a Catholic I did not say it out loud. "It is true Italy is the land of the arts," was my more polite rejoinder; "but I am too ignorant to appreciate her treasures, nor can I speak her language."

"Still, she is the renowned of history, and Miss, if no artist, is well read. She will recall with gratification the wonderful events which——"

Ah me! I recalled with loathing and an inward shudder the bright hours which were darkened through tedious reading of Roman battles and the tortures of the Colisseum games. Nero and Caligula rose before me. "I am abroad for recreation, *liebe Frau*," answered I; "permit me to waive aside the discussion of anything so dull as history. To Switzerland with pleasure, and after that, as you say, may Heaven direct our steps." Could I in the circumstances have been firmer or more explicit, I ask my reader? Or would it have availed me if I had been? Free-will is, I fear, a delusion; that is the comment I make now in looking back on that eventful journey, the journey that was to lead me to Rome, though I knew it not then.

A curious journey it was, and anything but a direct one even so far as Davos Platz. I remember finding myself in a train somewhere between the Black Forest, where we slept a night or two, and Romanshorn on the Boden See, watching my friend, on a hot September afternoon, as with restless ingenuity she tried to shut out the smell of smoke which oozed in from the next compartment. First both the windows were closed; next the crevices were stuffed up with fragments of a newspaper; then her handkerchief was put in requisition; finally she asked for mine. Up to this point I had been too lazy to interfere. Now I struck the note of free-will. "I cannot spare it," I said firmly. "And don't you think we shall both be stifled if we have the windows shut and the crannies stopped?" And with that I let down the window on my side.

"Dear Miss, consider——"

"I have considered," was my reply. "What is the smell of tobacco-smoke when set against the probability of my fainting? And you a German!" I added with mild reproach.

The beautiful lake spread out before us, gleaming blue and green by turns and flecked with white foam. The Boden See, where Saint Gall threw his fishing nets, and where Eckhart sat on the shore dreaming. I too dreamed as the train flashed by, and then I sat up straight with a new idea on my lips.

"Let us stop at St. Gallen," begged I of my friend. "I have seen the staff of the holy man which he brought from the green land of Erin; let me visit the land where he planted it, and behold the fruit it bore. Am I not Irish too?"

"Surely, dear Miss, surely," said she; "we will sleep at Rorshach and go up to-morrow by the Zahn'bahn. There are still four weeks and to spare before we are to meet Frau von Reisewitz at Rome."

Ah, worthy Saint Gall! You rest from your labours, and your works have followed you into the far-off land. At least let us hope so, for there is no trace of them left, so far as we could see, in the flourishing Swiss town that bears your name perched high above the glittering lake. Crowded workshops are there, busy streets, restaurants thronged,—but no reminiscence of the Saint. I brought away no relic of the early centuries, not even a fresh impression of their force in the evolution of modern civilisation; nothing but some lovely embroideries done by the deft fingers of the Appenzel women, a memory of brilliant sunshine and crisp air, and a photograph of the modern town crowning the hill up which had toiled so many feet, the feet of learners drawn thither by the reputation of the famous abbey.

Ragatz and Bad Pfeffers were our next halt; but I have no recollection of the famous gorge, for the very good reason that I did not go there. My predilections do not run towards gloomy spots, and I preferred the sunshine on the parade where I wandered up and down well content in the balmy air of the afternoon, while my friend sought the dark places of the earth.

"I travel to enjoy myself," said I in answer to her remonstrances. "What does it matter to me if people ask me on my return home what I think of the wonderful Klamm? I do not wish to see it, and I will not go. Besides, no one will ask me; the fame is purely a local fame, and has not reached to England." By this you will see that I am a very ignorant person; but that is not of the very least consequence, as the pleasure of learning is the greatest pleasure in the world, and I sometimes think we are born ignorant in order that we may evolve happiness. So, leaving Ragatz bathed in its lazy sunshine, the next day found us at Landquart watching the diligence being packed for Davos.

"Where are the two places reserved for us by telegram?" asked my friend.

"Here, my ladies," said the guard, pointing to the back seat inside.

"I cannot ride backwards," said she.

The guard waved his hand suggestively towards two stout ladies who overflowed the forward seat, but who retained their places with determined indifference. "Could Madame accommodate herself in the coupé?"

"What, with two gentlemen who smoke?" cried my friend in horror.

One of the gentlemen was willing to go inside, and the other professed every desire to make himself agreeable.

"But would it be proper for me to travel with one gentleman alone in a coupé for hours,—how many hours, *Herr Conducteur?*"

"Six, Madame, six short little hours ; and it will soon be dark ; you will not be troubled by perceiving the gentleman, and see, he has already thrown away his cigar."

I settled myself in my corner while she discussed this knotty point with the landlord of the posthouse, the guard, and her own conscience. I do not think the two gentlemen took any more part in it than by repeated bows indicative of self-effacement and a desire to please. Before the coachman cracked his whip as a preliminary to starting, one Herr had taken his seat by me, and the other, after politely assisting the lady to mount, followed her with a final bow.

I do not remember much of that six hours' drive (which, by the way, dragged itself out to eight) save rain and rocks when I looked out of window, and rest and reveries within. Half-way up the mountain we stopped to change horses and drink coffee. My friend came tapping at the glass to attract my attention. "Dear Miss, I think he is respectable. He too has been to Rome ; and now he has obligingly gone off to sleep. I am no longer apprehensive." And she disappeared in the darkness.

At last we were at Davos ; Davos that no one cares to hear about, for it is a home of sorrow where invalids go to wrestle with Death. As for me, I found letters waiting me with the saddest of all news, the death of a brother thousands of miles away ; and my friend was informed by telegram that the Frau von Reisewitz had been seized by an apoplexy and was not expected to live. So the projected journey was at an end, so far as she was concerned. The place had no charms for me, but how to get away from it was the difficulty. I longed for the summer that still lingered in the plains. The road up had been steep, but the road down was impos-

able, for the newly fallen snow was too soft for sledges, and wheels could no longer run. I studied maps of the road ; I conferred with the porter of the hotel ; I cross-questioned the landlord ; but a month passed and I was still there.

"There is but one road open, *mein Fräulein*," said a gentleman at *table d'hôte* across the dishes, "and that is the Fluela Pass. A diligence came over it to-day, and will go back to-morrow."

"Where will it take me ?" said I.

"To Italy," replied my friend at my side.

"But I am not going to Italy. Surely the road does not run straight to Rome without a chance of turning to the right hand or to the left. Tell me, *mein Herr*, where will it land me at the end of one day's journey ?"

"The road runs direct to Schuls, and from there to Nauders where you can sleep the night, and go on to Meran in the Tirol next morning."

"Meran ! Ah, Meran is heavenly," said my friend. "Go to Meran, dear Miss, and I will join you there when Heaven and the Herr Doctor permit my suffering child to depart from here. It is late for the grape-cure, but the air is beneficent, and we should do well to pause there for a while on our way to Rome."

"I will go," said I. "And when you and Natalie go southwards I will turn the other way." Man proposes ; generically I was man, though individually woman, and I shared the common fate of the race.

I started the next morning at seven o'clock, and watched with joy in my heart the rosy tints glow on one snowpeak after another as I left Davos behind me. My companions inside the coach were two maidservants, loud and noisy, whose odour of garlic displeased me, and of whose *patois* I understood not

a word. If I could but be outside in the sunshine by the side of the coachman! But there sat the guard blowing a mighty horn.

"*Herr Conducteur*," said I in my best German, "would it be agreeable to you to change places with me? These maidens and I cannot converse, and it is dull for me inside."

The next minute I was on the top of the coach, my feet dangling towards a splashboard but unable to reach it. The coachman, attired in a lovely yellow spencer with short tails and a shiny hat, was proud to have an *Engländerin* to talk to, and gave me much interesting information. He told me, for instance, that we should be among the eternal snows in an hour's time, and that bears were sometimes found there. This might have alarmed me had I not felt that I was out of their reach. His next item of information appealed more closely to the situation: this was the last day of the coach's running for the winter, and it was not going further than Schuls; but I could go on to Landack by another diligence which started from that place at three o'clock in the afternoon.

"At what time shall we be in?" asked I.

"Oh! in plenty of time. The gracious lady (*Gnädige*) can eat her dinner in comfort at Schuls and reach Landeck by the hour for supper."

Knowing that Schuls (with its adjoining village of Tarasp) was a fashionable watering-place where I should find all the comforts of civilised life I looked forward to my dinner with equanimity, only hoping I might have half an hour to view the place in. And so we went on; up and up, winding round snowy spurs of mountain, and ever and again catching a glimpse of sunny valleys. Before we reached the summit (not of the mountain, but of the pass)

we halted at a rough sort of little inn where horses were changed and passengers refreshed. I, having my lunch in a bag, chose to walk on, after having made sure that there was but one road without any possibility of losing my way. On and on I went, thinking that any moment I might hear the rumbling wheels as well as the cheerful horn behind me. An hour passed, an hour and a quarter; I was tired, and yet I could not sit down for there was nothing but snow to sit upon. I dawdled along till, turning a corner of the winding road, I spied on my right the rough head of a lichenized rock tolerably clear of snow. Here I could rest for a few minutes, for though bitterly cold the air was still. Suddenly a great wave of loneliness rushed over me. I was apart from every creature with whom I had ties in the world; a lone woman, on a lone mountain, name unknown. It was as if I had stepped out into space, and might tumble into an abyss without any one being aware of it. My friend, much occupied with her sick child and the subtleties of German etiquette, would not take any steps to find me out if she did not hear for a week or more of my arrival at Meran. As a matter of fact she did not get any tidings of me for nearly a month, owing to the floods destroying all communication a day or two afterwards between Tirol and the outer world, while Davos was equally cut off in consequence of a fresh fall of snow; but I never found out that she had been in the least anxious about me. We take so much for granted in this social life of ours, and she took for granted I was safe at Meran. So there I sat and waited, with an outward calmness but with inward tremors not due to the cold; when, in the distance, coming slowly over the

white hillocks I saw something dark, and *it had four legs*. No chance now of preserving my outward calm or my inward self-respect! The balance was gone, and I in a perfect panic of terror. I continued to sit on the rock only because my limbs shook so that I could not rise, much less run away—indeed, what refuge was there to run to? I did not scream because I could not, my heart was beating so hard. Of course it was a bear; had not the coachman told me there were bears abroad in the snow? I had better have agreed to go to Rome in cheerful company than have wandered up here on a lone mountain to be devoured by a bear. Just at that moment (which seemed to me as an hour) I heard the guard's blatant horn. Probably the bear heard it also, for when I next looked that way, which was not till I was safe by the side of the yellow jacket, there was nothing to be seen save the white hillocks under the gray sky. Perhaps it was not a bear; perhaps it was a donkey or a cow; but what would such be doing up there amid the eternal snows? At all events it was a bear to all intents and purposes in terrifying me. But as I had enough to do, holding on to a narrow side-rail to prevent myself from falling off the box-seat when we began to rattle down-hill, as we did shortly after, I soon forgot my fears. Another time I might have been frightened at the danger I was in as we swung along behind the three strong horses at full gallop. I had nothing to fix my feet on, remember, since I could barely touch the splash-board with my toes, and they hung clear of the ground. When one has just escaped from the jaws of a bear, however, one is not ripe for a fresh sensation of terror; the pendulum of sensation swings back to content. I had an undoubted conviction that

with the next turn of the corkscrew road we should swerve to the left, but I looked calmly at the green depths of mountain torrent some two hundred feet or so below. Once I thought of putting my arm round the yellow waist for extra support, as my little rail was not to be relied on. It was only a passing thought, and I freely acknowledged to myself the next moment that it was unworthy of an Englishwoman. The trot never slackened. Down we went for miles and miles; down went the stream on the left, keeping ever a respectful distance below us. On the right hand after the snow came pines; after the pines came birch; after the feathery birch the green merged into the glowing tints of autumn oaks and beeches. Long before we reached the bottom I had waked from a state of dreamy content to a rapture of felicity. The motion, the air, the sunshine, belonged to a new world of life and hope, and I was carried along in it without volition or effort. Why are we so fond of our own wills, I wonder, when to be deprived of their exercise is so sweet?

The bottom reached at length and fresh horses spanned, without any delay this time, we sloped leisurely along through dale and mead for another hour or two, till we drew up at Schuls, exactly as the village clock struck four. The diligence to Landeck had started, as in duty bound, at two o'clock. Clearly, I must wait till to-morrow.

"But the *Gnädige* is perhaps not aware that it has gone for the last time till next spring?" said the porter at the door of the *Hôtel Poste*. A bed? Yes; I could have a bed. There were some fifty beds at the hotel, and all of them empty; the season was over. I ordered my supper and walked out to view the beauties of the much-frequented village before

it should grow too dark to see them. But a deserted watering-place is not a cheerful spot, and the sun sank behind the hills before I had done more than taste three of the mineral springs so renowned for their virtues ; and I finished my supper by candlelight long before the clock struck seven. The room was lonesome, being adapted for some sixty guests. I had a little cloth spread at the end of a table yards long, and when I asked the waiting-maid if she could find me something to read, she furnished me with two old newspapers containing, she assured me, the most horrible and interesting account of a murder in the nearest village. I kept the teapot on the table, by way of company, for such a time that the maiden returned (without any summons) to say she was going to bed. It was not eight o'clock, but I had to be up by five the next morning, having arranged to go in the mail-cart to Nauders, so I let her show me to my room, up many stairs and at the end of a long passage flanked by empty chambers.

"Shall you hear me if I ring in the night?" said I.

"If Madame requires anything I will fetch it before I go to bed," said she, evading the question. On pressure she owned to sleeping in the kitchen at the other end of the building.

"Where do the family sleep?"

"In the *dépendance*."

"Is there no one else in the hotel?"

"Certainly, the *hausknecht* [or boots, as we might call him] sleeps in the entry ; and he will call Madame in time to have a cup of coffee before she starts at six."

There were no bells from my room to either the front-door or the kitchen ; so there was nothing for it but to lock my door and make the best of it. First, however, I put my boots outside. They were large and stout ;

my very thickest pair, with even a few nails in the soles ; a robber might be pardoned if he fathered them on a man, and for the first time in my life I was glad to remember that my feet were large. There were neither curtains nor blinds to my windows ; all the drapery of the house had been washed and put away for the winter. Just as I was about to get into bed I noticed to my dismay that there was a second door which I had not observed before as it was partly hid behind a large china stove in the further corner ; and worse than this, the bolt was outside. I took my light and wandered through three rooms, till I finally came out into the passage. So I crept back to bed without exploring further, and took my only possible precaution against the entry of any evil-disposed person in the night by poising a chair on its hind-legs against the door in such fashion that it must inevitably fall down if the door were opened. I do not know that it would be any pleasanter to be murdered awake than asleep, but one has a strong feeling of dislike against being taken unawares.

Strange to say, I slept soundly, and only awoke when the *hausknecht* deposited my boots with a resounding thump at my door, announcing at the same time that it was half-past five and that my coffee was waiting. It was an odd little conveyance in which I found my boxes packed ; the horse was so small that I feared he would be lifted off his legs by their weight, added to the Imperial mails and a large sack of provender, at the very first hill we came to. In front there were but two seats, and very small ones. We were still in Switzerland, so perhaps I ought not to speak of Imperial mails ; but we were near to the borders of Austria and the mails were for that country. My driver was a Tyrolean, and we passed, luggage

and all, through the toll-gate without being stopped. His brother Tiroler, who came out with gun and bayonet, believed him without hesitation when he declared that I had nothing on which to pay duty.

It was a pretty road, over ground quite new to me; and ever in the distance we saw the white heads of some well-known Tiroler Spitz. But at Nauders another disappointment awaited me, which even the excellent *gembsbraten* and pancakes with salad could not soften. It was only half-past eleven when I sat down to dinner, but I was not in time for the last diligence to Meran, as it had started the day before! Clearly I could not wait till next spring, when it would run again; and if I went on to Landeck with the mail I should not be able to get from there to Meran, as the railway over the Brenner was partly destroyed by the floods and no trains were running. There was nothing for it but to inquire if this little posthouse had a carriage of any sort. "Surely," said mine host; the Government obliged him to keep horses for the post and there was an old but capacious landau, and a postilion at my service who would take me to Meran. "How much would it cost?" was my next question, for I had but little money with me, only two English sovereigns and a few German and Swiss coins quite useless in Austria. So far as I remember, I received back a gulden and a half when I had paid for my carriage in advance, as I was bound to do. Then I was provided with a *fahrzettel*, or waybill, which was signed and sealed by the postmaster, engaging himself to deliver me safe at Meran; and this I was to show at every place where we stopped to change horses, which I think we did seven times. The postilion blew his horn loudly as we neared the baiting-place, and by the time we pulled up at the post

fresh horses were being led out of the stable, and mine host stood at the door smiling with a "*Gruss Gott, Gnädige*, will you do me the honour to alight, or do you wish to go on immediately?" The waybill was duly signed, attesting that I was so far safe and sound, and so many miles nearer my destination. The yellow postilion with tasselled hat jumped on the near horse, and we were off again. At starting from Nauders I was inside the landau, but it was so big and lonely that I soon mounted outside, where the driver would have sat had there been one; and so there was no impediment to my view of the lovely country as we swept along up hill and down dale. The horses were always good and fresh and the pace was quick; but for all that it was dark long before we got to Meran,—long, long before, for it was past midnight ere we reached it.

Shall I ever forget that drive, though I live to be so old that I forget most things? I can still hear the torrents as they roared down the mountains; I feel the oscillation of the old landau; I can count the stars which I saw through the windows, for you may assume that I was not on the box after the sun had set, but inside wrapped up in my fur cloak. I can even remember the thoughts which rushed through my brain keeping time with the rushing of the waters. Sometimes it was light enough to see the white foam of the waterfalls beneath the road; sometimes I heard the waves splash round the wheels. Once, with a great lurch, we smashed a window against a projecting rock, but the splintered glass fortunately fell outside. Sometimes I only saw dark boughs tossing in the wind. On and on we went, on and on in the rain and the darkness. What were my friends at home doing? Sleeping soundly in their nice white beds, little

dreaming of me, the sport of Fate, on the road to Rome! At last, to my watching eyes came the lights of our last halting-place before Meran. There was a delay in getting out the horses as the stablemen were asleep (naturally, at such an hour of the night,) and the landlord had also to be awakened to sign my papers. So I alighted and refreshed myself with a glass of red wine and a slice of black bread; and taking up the visitors' book, which lay on the window-sill, saw with inexpressible pleasure the name of a friend who had passed that way two years before. This took away all feeling of loneliness, and demanding a pen I wrote my own name in clear letters on the next page, and went on my way rejoicing. The human heart is a strange thing. What earthly use or comfort could Caroline Martineau who lived at St. Albans, England, be to me in the heart of the Rhœtian Alps on my way to Rome? And yet I felt a different person when I got into my landau again. At last, at last, the bell of the *Erzherzog Johann* was rung, and a porter, half-asleep and less than half-dressed, opened the door, staring to see a lady getting out of the carriage. Where had the gracious lady come from at midnight, when all respectable folk were asleep? But I had written for a room before I left Davos, and desired to be shown to it at once. I was not, however, allowed to retire until I had signed my waybill (with the porter to attest my signature) assuring His Imperial Majesty Francis Joseph, Emperor of Austria, including Tirol, and King of Hungary and Bohemia, that his servants had performed their contract with truth and honesty.

The next morning the sun rose brightly on beautiful Meran, and I rubbed my eyes as I sat up in bed drinking my coffee with a relish, which will be understood by any one

who knows foreign hotels, for they will also know that I was not even offered any supper the night before. I rubbed my eyes, as I say, and asked myself if the perilous drive in the darkness was a dream or reality.

Beautiful Meran, however, was seldom seen during this visit save through a veil of tears. That first day's brightness was drowned by the torrents of rain which fell for the first fortnight. The snow which fell on the mountains and blocked all the passes meant rain in the valleys. The floods were out, and all communication with the outer world was cut off. Bridges were carried away, rails under water, telegraph posts knocked down. Meran was to all intents and purposes a prison, since I could not get out of it, and no one else could get in. Still, it was a charming prison, and after the first fortnight came on most days a bright interval, when, wandering by castle and river and vineyard, one remembered that Paradise begins with a P as well as Prison. After about a month I resolved that another week must get me gone if possible, or my purse would be empty. Circular notes are very handy while they last; but when they came to an end it was necessary to escape from Meran to the nearest point where cheques were understood. I haunted the station daily, and was finally told that on the following Monday, the fifth of November, I might go as far as Terlau by train, if I could accommodate myself to transit by boat for the few miles remaining before Botzen could be reached.

A voyage by boat over flooded vineyards and cornfields did not sound very tempting, but the floods might rise again and I might lose even this opportunity. A telegram from Davos telling me that my friend hoped to be at Florence without fail on the tenth decided me to meet her there. The

Brenner Pass was still closed, and therefore the southern route was the only possible one. Numbers of people were waiting to get out of Meran as well as myself, but they all agreed I should go first as pioneer. "If the English Miss," said they, "could come in the dead of night from Heaven only knew where, with but a yellow postilion for escort, through torrents and over mountains, she was doubtless foolhardy enough to go with the first train that tried to force its way through the submerged country; but for themselves, they would not risk their lives until they knew if she survived the perils."

"A curious sort of holiday, I am having," thought I. "But, after all, it is a very different life from nursing sick folks in England, and it was a thorough change which the doctor advised me to take. Heroines in romances always meet with adventures, I observe; how much pleasanter it is to have them than merely to read about them!"

"Adieu, friends," said I, waving my hand as I steamed out of Meran at six o'clock in the morning; but there was no reply, since the station-master could scarcely come under that title, and every one else was safe in bed at the *Erzherzog Johann*. What a journey that was! I could have cried over the ruined crops of maize and corn, and the sodden meads we passed through. I could have cried if that would have been any use, or done a gulden's worth of good to the brave peasants; but as it would not, I looked about me and took in impressions. The wheel-road, which for part of the way ran close to the rails, was still quite impassable. Great rocks lay waiting to be blasted, huge chasms to be bridged over: carriages it was hardly likely would be able to get by for months to come; and this was the first train which had run for

many weeks. Run! I should rather say crawled. The distance between Meran and Botzen is about twenty miles, and in general circumstances the journey was made in an hour and a half. To-day we took double that time at least to reach Terlau, where we were transferred to our boats. It was a raft that carried me. I remember sitting on one box and putting my feet on the other to keep them out of the muddy water; I remember a polite Tiroler wrapping me round with a tarpaulin to keep my skirts dry; I remember two peasant women calling on all the saints in heaven to protect them from the danger of a watery grave, as we swirled round a nasty snag which caught our raft; and the clusters of grapes coated with yellow mud which flapped against our boatman's oar as he punted us along. And finally I remember that the church clock struck eleven as we anchored by the Post Amt in the Platz at Botzen and disembarked ourselves.

"When does the train start for Trent?" was my first inquiry.

"The *Gnädige* will surely not think of going further to-day after such a journey?" said the postmaster, who stood on the steps watching us.

"The train, the train! Tell me quick!" was my only reply.

"There is no train either up or down; but there is a diligence just starting if the lady can hasten herself, and it will land her at Salurn, a small village not many miles from Trent, and there she can take the train southwards. We have just been telegraphed that the line is open from Salurn."

"To Salurn, then," said I, "and be quick with my luggage."

Sure enough there was the lumbering conveyance standing at the door of the hotel on the other side of the Platz. The horses were being put in;

a fat priest and several country-folks were standing about waiting. It was not a diligence, but simply an omnibus which was generally used to take passengers to the station about a quarter of a mile off; and very well fitted for that service no doubt, but not at all adapted for a journey of twelve or fifteen miles (I do not know the exact distance) through flowing roads and fallen stones and deep ruts. Still, what other exit was open to me? In then I jumped. No one else followed my example; the coachman was eating his dinner; the priest was smoking a pipe; the other passengers were chatting and drinking beer. I also began to long for some lunch since my breakfast had been early, but the landlady assured me the omnibus would start directly, and there was no time to eat anything even if she had it ready. Twelve o'clock struck, and the coachman put his head out of the kitchen-door. At the same moment an English voice struck on my ear. "Surely I am not mistaken; you are a fellow countrywoman, but how did you get here through the floods, and where are you going to?" So spake my guardian angel, who had taken the shape of an elderly lady with her head tied up in a little black shawl.

"But you must be hungry, my dear," said the kind creature, when my explanations had been given; "come to my house, and have something to eat." "There is not time," said I, "and I have telegraphed to Trient for a bed and supper to be ready by six o'clock." "Don't dream you will be there to-night," said she. "Thank Heaven if you reach Salurn before dark. I know the roads, and dare not venture at my age. And as for food, can you eat *schmurn*? Wait, coachman, wait!" cried she, as she dashed round the corner in a surprising manner for an old lady, and came back in two minutes with half a chicken and some

bread in one hand and a large piece of paper in the other, which she deposited in my lap. "No, no!" cried she, waving away my purse as the coachman smacked his whip warningly. "God sends His bread and meat sometimes by the ravens; it is payment enough that He chooses me for His carrier this time. I have lived in Austria forty years and was sick for the sound of an English voice. Come and see me if ever you pass—" but the name was lost in the rattling of the wheels and clatter of hoofs over the paved square, and I could only shout my thanks as I looked back at my guardian angel flapping the ends of her little black shawl by way of adieu, certainly not unlike a large raven in appearance. Well for me that, whether by angel or bird, these provisions were dropped into my lap! Tired and hungry as I was when I reached Salurn that evening I should have been in a far worse plight had I been without anything to eat during the weary seven hours that drive lasted.

Flop and flounder went our horses through the mud; splash went the wheels. Sometimes I saw the horses' bellies sitting on the waves, and their legs—nowhere. The harness strained; the coachman holloaed; the passengers were tossed from side to side; the women groaned; and I, sitting upright as nearly as I could, held fast to my precious bag which contained the little money I had left, and my only means of getting more. I sat in the dark, for the short November day was soon at an end; and so sitting I reflected once more on the odd circumstances in which I found myself. But not once did I wish myself back in England. When one is out for a holiday what can one wish for but something quite new? So when at last the omnibus stopped at the station of Salurn about seven o'clock

in the evening, I alighted without any feeling of resentment in my heart at the fate which had led me there.

I think I felt a little disappointed when I was told that the next train started at six the following morning. But I booked my boxes for Trent and took my ticket so as to have no bustle at starting, and with my precious bag in my hand I trudged off in the pitchy darkness, guided by a boy with a lantern who undertook to convoy me to the village inn. He carried my bundle of wraps and said much to me by the way, to which however I did not feel obliged to listen.

Ten minutes' walk brought us to a cavernous opening and I, climbing a rough stone staircase, saw at last a lighted room and a stove with travelers seated round it.

Could I have a bed? The hostess stared at me. I could sit by the fire she said, or perhaps lie down on a kind of settle, covered with harsh American cloth and not over clean, which she pointed out in the shades of the further end. "Have you no guest-chamber?" I asked. And after much consideration and a word with her husband she lighted a candle and led me carefully through an ante-room, piled up with threshed-out maize-stalks, to a door which she unlocked, and so into a room where the heavy ears of Indian corn were laid in rows along the floor, while onions and apples were heaped in the corners and bunches of small red and yellow tomatoes hung from the rafters. There was a bedstead behind the door, and a chair, one only, stood by its side. The bed had not been used for years, she confessed, not since the opening of the railway. But she had sheets, —clean sheets—at my service, adding doubtfully that perhaps if she put a pan of hot coals between the feather-bed and the mattress it might not be

so very damp after all by the time I had eaten my supper. Coffee? No, that was impossible, but a glass of real red Tiroler wine was at my command, as well as a share of the smoking dish of polenta which stood on the table of the common-room flanked by a large loaf of black bread. I took my seat with the rest, and when I had finished she led me again to my chamber, charging me to be very careful lest any sparks from my candle fell among the litter.

Could I have some bread and milk before I started for the train next morning? No, certainly not. Could I have a cart of any kind, or a boy to carry my things to the station? She thought not, but would speak to her husband. The brazier of charcoal, which she had placed in the bed to air it, had drawn out the damp, certainly, and it had taken refuge in the clean sheets. So, distrusting the interior I laid me down on the outside of the bed, wrapped in my fur cloak, and waited for the day.

The good woman had really bestirred herself to get us each a cup of coffee for breakfast at five o'clock next morning; and as she only charged tenpence for the whole of her entertainment, I had not to complain of either incivility or extortion, though I might have complained, had I been so minded, both of the quality of the coffee and the comfort of the bed. But circumstances alter cases, and while she did her best and reaped her modest reward, I rested and was thankful.

"The *Gnädige* was asking for a cart to convey her to the station," said the good man of the house tentatively, when I paid him my tenpence without demur.

"Yes," said I.

"There is a gentleman," pointing to a hump-backed Jew of dwarfish stature and lame of one leg, "who cannot

walk, and if the *Gnädige* likes to share with him this little cart which is going to the field, the lad can drive you to the station on his way."

It was only a common little cart, such as we call a *butt* in Devonshire. I put one foot on the low shaft and jumped in lightly, settling myself on the narrow board laid across by way of seat. The Jew clambered in less elegantly and took the other side, but the space was so narrow that we jogged elbows unpleasantly; still any company on wheels was better than tramping through mud and water in the chill darkness just before dawn. The horse being hitched on by a much-knotted rope, and the boy standing up in front of us, we started. "How much to pay?" called I to my host. "Nothing," said he; "the gentleman has promised a *trinkgeld* to the lad, and that suffices." We were off before I could say "Thank you."

It was a mercy we were not rattled out as we drove. There was nothing to hold on to, save each other. The dwarf clutched hold of me more than once as we turned a corner. I steadied myself as best I could, holding on to my precious bag, out of which I produced a copper to pay toll at the bridge, my companion not being very ready at finding his purse. I had a quarter-gulden ready for our driver when we got out at the station.

"What shall we bestow on him for *trinkgeld*?" asked the Jew as he fumbled in his pocket.

"I shall give him this," said I, "and if you will do the same that will be fair."

"Oh, that is quite enough for both of us," was his answer, as he shouldered his pack and disappeared into the darkness.

"So you will have your ride for nothing," cried I. But he neither heard nor answered. "Poor fellow! It is hard to be a hunchback as well

as a Jew; it must darken the moral sense, was my reflection. And perhaps it was in consequence of this Christian sentiment that the next Israelites I met amply atoned for their brother's delinquencies. But that belongs to another stage of my story, and I must not forestall; I have to reach Trient first.

When I did get there I found a charming hotel, with a waterfall several hundred feet in height sparkling in the rays of the rising sun just opposite the window where I sat dawdling over my luncheon. There were three waiters with nothing to do but wait on me. I had coffee of the best, and an omelette of the lightest. The host himself came to offer his compliments and inquire into my plans, while the mistress did me the honour of conducting me to my apartment. Could they make enough of the first traveller they had welcomed for weeks? I was like the harbinger of better days for them.

"Beautiful, beautiful Trient!" said I, when, having finished my meal, I went out to explore the famous city. "Is it because no Jews have been allowed to sleep within your walls for centuries that you are also so clean and comfortable?" And I went on to demand that I should be shown the tomb of the Christian baby whom the Jews had killed in order that they might mix its blood with their Passover cakes. At last I found some one who knew its whereabouts, and though I would rather not believe the story, I gazed at the tablet on the wall with interest, and pondered as I read the horrid inscription. For, whether rightly or wrongly accused of this terrible crime, the Jews were ever afterwards locked out of the city when night fell. Even to this day none of that race dwell there, though I suppose some find their way as travellers now and again; for I think I

saw my hunchback skurrying round a corner as I came out of the church.

The day was lovely, and I could not bear to feel I must be off tomorrow without trying to see as much as possible in my one day there. So my landlord finding me as guide a friend of his own who could speak some German as well as drive a gig, I entrusted myself to him and went off to view the environs of the city, and to visit a lake some few miles distant.

What a lovely peaceful scene remains on my mind's eye; mulberry trees turning yellow in the autumn sun, cattle reflected in the still waters of the lake, brown peasant-women with coral necklaces and strange head-gear raking in the fields,—and over all the deep blue skies of Italy. We were not out of Tirol, it is true: the boundary was a little further on at Ala; but except on the map it was Italy to all intents and purposes, for the people talked Italian and dressed Italian, and the landscape was that of the old Italian masters.

When the horse was put up at any straight-lined, sleepy-looking red village on the hill-side, I wandered about and tried in vain to buy some grapes of the picturesque women dawdling in the doorways. But the bargain could not be brought to pass as I knew but two words of their language, and they none of mine. *Non capisco* served me very well later on in my journey, but at this moment failed entirely in making the fat laughing woman with big black eyes understand that I wanted grapes to eat. Not unnaturally, you will think; but I, when I am on a journey, do not stand at possibilities, but am ever

on the look-out for the unnatural. In this case I did not get anything but a hard maize cake and a tiny glass of crude white wine, something like bad cider, out of my environment. So I nodded farewell, having no words to say it with, and jumping into my gig, ordered the hood to be put up and drove home in the starlight and silence. Strange to say that word "home" in speaking of a town so far away from England! But I had heard of the Council of Trent from my earliest years, and though I have but a vague idea of what the Council did, I have always connected it in my mind with the Bible and the Catechism and going to church on Sundays,—than which what can be more home-like?

At all events I got back to my hotel, where I found a good dinner and a good fire of scented pine-logs awaiting me, and tired out with sightseeing, and with the remembrance of my last night's bed at Salurn strong upon me, I sank into the softest couch of repose, only waking once by strange good fortune to view at the right moment, somewhere among the small hours, the mysterious comet of that year of floods trailing its feathered light across the sky opposite my uncurtained window.

The next morning I said good-bye with regret to the host and hostess, and the three bowing waiters at the front door. I see them standing there now as I turn my head; the white walls of the Hôtel di Trent as background, three black coats waving their napkins in farewell, and two huge oleanders blossoming and bright at the bottom of the steps as foreground.

(*To be continued.*)

EXILES.

WHERE Castrogiovanni looks seawards, rough with scattered rocks and scanty bushes of such plants as have no fear of spray and sea-winds, Nicola the herd-boy went calling his goats together. Now and then he broke off in the midst of his calling to sing a snatch of song that he had picked up from the fishermen of Terranova.

I have no gold, I have no gear,
I only have a mistress dear,

Benedetta !

And this one joy is all I have,
That when there's war 'twixt wind and wave,
My mistress rises from her grave,

Benedetta !

Her hair is gold, her eyes are gray,
There lives on earth no fairer May,

Benedetta !

What time there's shipwreck on the sea,
My ghost-girl cometh back to me,
My ghost-girl is so fair to see,

Benedetta !

There were a few poppies growing scantily among the thyme and lentisks, and with a little cry of delight Nicola stooped to gather them. He had a passion for all beautiful things, and for poppies in particular; a passion that had grown with his growth, and was all the stronger for his keen consciousness of the burden Fate had laid upon him in the shape of stumbling wits and the red birthmark on his cheek that was like a splash of blood.

The poppies also were like blood spilled among the rocks, Nicola thought, as he leaned over them, plucking them slowly one by one, listening the while to the nimble feet of his goats as they came up from their feeding-places, stopping now and again to crop a juicy weed or a tussock of tender grass. Then there fell

on Nicola's listening ears a footfall lighter and nimbler than any goat's, and he stood up, startled, holding the poppies to his face in a piteous attempt to hide his blemish with their beauty.

"It is only I," said a soft voice. "Have you been waiting for me long, pretty boy?" Wild and shy as any bird, Nicola was making ready to flee when a cold, soft hand touched his wrist and stopped him dead. Then he looked up, with a trouble deeper than tears in his eyes. Was she laughing at his ugly face, he wondered, this lady who looked like a queen in her straight gray gown, for all her bare feet and bare head? He did not know, poor lad, that the eyes which were looking on him could see right down into the whitest and most secret chamber of his heart, where God had locked his beauty away till the Judgment Day.

She came out from the shadows now, drawing the boy with her, and now Nicola could see her plainly in the delaying sunset, and all desire for flight left him, although her hand had fallen from his arm and he was free to go or stay.

"Have you waited for me long?" she said again, imperiously waving an intrusive moth away from her face with a slender green bough of some tree Nicola did not know.

"Not long, Siora," Nicola stammered. "I came just before sundown, and it is not dark yet."

"No, there is colour in the west still," the lady said, with her eyes on Nicola's face. Colour there was indeed; Nicola had never seen such a

sunset before, and he drew a long breath as he looked up at the sea of quivering gold and scarlet and primrose that paled the true green sea below. Then he turned his eyes on the lady's face, his thought taking shape in words.

"It looks like fire in heaven, Siora. Was there ever such a thing?"

"There was fire in heaven once," she said, looking beyond him now with a stern smile; "but it was quenched long ago. Have not your priests told you how?"

"No," Nicola said shyly. "I will ask the Padre, if I remember, Siora."

"Better forget, boy; all the dear things are meant to be forgotten."

"Are they, Siora? The Padre is often angry with me because I forget so much."

"If you were to be angry with him for remembering so much, Nicola, what would he say?" Nicola's dim brain was not able to grasp the inference, and his eyes clouded over once more; and once more the cold, soft fingers touched his wrist, and quickened the slothful pulses there.

"You were singing when I saw you first; sing to me now, Nicola."

The boy hesitated and stammered; then the words of his song came fitfully back to him, and he sang

I have no gold, I have no gear,
I serve a Mistress fair and dear:
Her voice is music faint and far,
Her eyes are deep as waters are,
Her face is strange as any star.

She walks the world and is not known—

"I—forget," Nicola said, stopping abruptly, "and it comes to me differently now, and the tune seems wrong." He looked up shyly at the lady and saw that there were tears in her dark eyes; and now he found out that her face was but a girl's face after all, and what he had taken for sternness was only an infinite sadness.

"Why do you look at me so?" she said presently, with a glimmering smile. "Do you think you know me, pretty boy? Or are you beginning to remember how long you have waited for me?" Nicola's eyes went slowly from her white feet to the crown of her wind-tossed hair, and the trouble in his face deepened.

"Is it a long time, Siora? I—forget. Did I see you before I had the fever and Nunziata died?"

"Be still with your Nunziata, boy—the dreadful name!" she cried out passionately. "What does it mean? It makes me think of such old, old terrors—dreadful blind eyes and dead faces and dead blank walls!" She waved her green branch as if to banish the pictures she spoke of, and now the poppies Nicola still held to his face sent such a tingle of pain through his cheek that he let them fall. The stranger's eyes passed over his blemished cheek with a kind of alien pity, and, following the fallen flowers, suddenly lighted with new fires.

"What are they?" she asked, letting fall her green bough and holding out impatient hands to Nicola. "What flowers are they? Give them to me."

Nicola had almost trodden the poppies underfoot, but now he looked down, and saw their scarlet staining the stones, and remorsefully he gathered them up, one by one, and laid them in the lady's outstretched hands. "They are poppies, Siora, only poppies—but I did not mean to hurt them, only I was looking at you."

"I had forgotten what poppies were like," she said, sorrowfully; "and yet once I used to know. May I have these for my own, Nicola?"

"Oh, Siora, they are trodden, and almost dead. But I could get you others, finer than these by far, if I might come to you to-morrow," cried the boy, trembling with a passion for

which his simplicity knew no name. "Siora, may I come to you again?"

"I do not know." She had moved from her place now, and was standing a little nearer him, taking no heed of the goat that was nibbling at her fallen branch; and it might have been only the twilight that made her face seem to grow older as it looked broodingly down upon Nicola. "I hardly know. There will be no storm to-night, and you do not cross the bay;" and she sighed a little. "What if you were never to see me again, Nicola?"

"I would die," Nicola said simply; and now her laughter rang out clear and cold and remote as the sound of falling water.

"What would that be to me? I have your poppies." Then, wistfully, "I wish I could understand, Nicola, this death you talk of. How young are you, Nicola? Does no one die young in Sicily?"

"My sister Nunziata died last year; and—"

"Don't speak that name, I tell you; it turns me cold, Nicola. Why did she die? Had she worn the yellow veil?"

"She was sixteen," Nicola said, looking wonderingly at her eager face; "and she was to have taken the veil next Easter."

"That is a feast-day of yours—yes? And then you scatter flowers, and burn sweet spices . . . Ah, but your sister died! Poor child! and how young are you, Nicola?"

"I am eighteen, Siora."

"Ah, I am older than that,—older than you by very many years, and

younger, too. But I never had a sister, Nicola; and my mother died long since. But her ghost walks the Catanian marshes still, I've heard tell."

"I have never seen a ghost," Nicola said, crossing himself; "but I've heard noises that the Padre could not, and—Siora, what ails you?"

"I am cold," she said holding the crushed poppies closer to her breast, and trembling violently; "and it is time for me to go. But I will come again, Nicola; have no fear of that."

"Here, Siora, to Castrogiovanni?"

"Here,—to Enna. It is time for me to go." She snatched another derelict poppy from under Nicola's feet, and added it to her posy, then stooped and laid her lips softly on the boy's blemished cheek. Then she turned and went into the shadows eastwards, while Nicola stumbled homewards, too dazed at first to notice that a white poppy lay on his breast tangled among the folds of his cloak, or to heed that the goat which had been browsing off the lady's leafy branch, the prettiest and nimblest of his flock, lay dead among the spurge and fennel.

And dazed and dreamy still he herds his goats on Enna to this day, a man grown with a child's face, and the good people of Castrogiovanni will tell you that in his boyhood a siren met him, and robbed him of the few wits he had to lose; but Nicola's silence holds fast the dear belief that 'twas Persephone herself he met, and none other.

WHEN WE WERE BOYS.

IV.

WHEN we were boys we had leave to roam in a wood which was not preserved, in the game-keeper's sense, or else we should not have been allowed such free right of its leafy ways. Nevertheless it happened to us, on glorious occasions, to put up a far-wandering cock-pheasant whose whirring wings made our little hearts beat at such a rate that we could scarcely see the wonder until it had risen high above the tree-tops. Rabbits, even, were so scarce that with all our searching and digging we never came upon a nest, though we used often to see them sitting in the field outside the boundary-fence, or catch a glimpse of them as they scuttled from us through the bushes. Our little weapons, catapults and the like, were not sufficient for their destruction, and we never became the possessors of any steel-trap larger than those in which we caught the poor small birds. Squirrels we used to see, and persecute from tree to tree until they escaped us behind a bough or in some dense leafy obscurity. Fur, in fact, is always too big game for boys, until they reach the gunning age. The true quarry of boys is feather, and a sufficing delight to them. Yet it did happen once that fur fell in our way,—once and once only, and not in too satisfactory a manner. For, as we wandered in the winter-time over the crackling floor of red, dry leaves, we espied a tiny bundle which looked for a moment as if it had been got together for a purpose,—looked like an edition, on a very small scale, of those balls of leaves and

grass which the hedgehogs manage to roll round themselves and in which we often found them, both in our orchard-hedge and in the wood. We took up this tiny bundle, and pulled off a leaf or two; then, thinking it after all a mere chance collection, threw it to the ground again. On which Joe, more sapiently curious, picked it up and, unrolling yet more coats of leaves, revealed at last, within this snug nest, a coiled up tiny red thing,—a dormouse. This was its winter home, in which it had promised itself to lie asleep all the cold weather through. But our quick eyes had detected it among surroundings so like itself; and Joe, with greater patience, had followed up our discovery to its culmination in this little, warm, breathing, furry, sleeping thing.

Of course we claimed it, crying quickly that we had found it, and demanding that we should be allowed the immediate joy of having it in our hand. To which Joe sturdily replied that we had indeed found it, but had thrown it away as of no worth, and that he had again found it; that it had become by our deed of rejection no man's property; but that now it was in deed and fact a man's property, namely his, and that he meant to keep it. No doubt the most obvious and ready way of settling the difficulty, as between boys, was the ordeal by battle; but this, having regard to the respective qualities of the contesting parties, was inadmissible, for Joe was our elder by two years and our superior in physical strength, so that such a mode of decision would

have been grossly unfair; whereas, on the other hand, we were Joe's superior in social station, so that he would have been unwilling to lay a violent hand upon us. In this dilemma we eventually resolved to submit the decision to the arbitrament of Fortune by the classical method of spinning a coin, namely a halfpenny, which, turning up a head, when we had called "tails," gave to Joe the dormouse and to us a feeling of unjust treatment which nearly found vent in tears. The only other vent which it found was in searching day after day for a whole week, and, at intervals, for many weeks, among that rich crackling carpet of dry leaves, but never again did the same luck befall us. We never found another dormouse, and probably we never shall.

We could find rabbits nearer home beside the stream which coursed through the meadow in which we flushed our first jacksnipe. Above the stream a great bank, topped with a hedge, sloped steeply up. In the bank were great holes, originally wrought by rabbits, but enlarged by the diggings of dogs and boys who strayed off the adjacent foot-path. The few harassed rabbits which made this bank their home were wary from constant persecution; too wary, and we could attempt nothing against them. Yet we loved the whole length of this valley along which the sluggish stream ran, from the pond formed for the cows to drink at (where once, when some draining operations were going on, we caught several eels of nine inches or a foot long) to the great tidal estuary of the big river where a few sand-pipers or dotterel were generally running at the edge of the water and a gull or two hovering and settling along the water-line. For part of its course this stream went almost buried

in a profuse tangle of bramble and blackthorn and May, such as often goes in the western counties to make what they simply call a hedge.

In this tangle we did not fail to find at least one blackbird's nest, and more than one thrush's. A few elms grew up through it, and against the stems of one of them, posted on a small outshooting branch, was the annual nest of a greenfinch. Nearer the cattle's drinking-place was a slope enclosed as too steep for pasturage, and within the enclosure were rhododendrons under the shadow of big beeches. The stems of the trees were covered with ivy, and in the ivy we commonly found one or two nests of wrens.

The nests of wrens, and of all dome-building birds, are a sad trial to boyhood, for it is scarcely possible to see into them, and the intrusion of a finger is apt to make the birds desert. But none of these were so cruel an exasperation as the mud-cups which the house martins built just below the eaves and at such a height from the third-story window that even by imperilling our lives on the windowsill we failed to reach them. Nothing therefore was more satisfactory to us than the high-handed action of a pair of sparrows in taking forcible possession of one of these nests and using it for their own domestic purposes. We did not know at what stage in the domestic operations of the builders the sparrows entered on their tenancy; we knew only that one day a sparrow's broad head and strong beak appeared peeping out over the mud wall and held its own against the complaints and challenges not only of the builders, but of a mass meeting of the unemployed of their kind which they seemed to have called together for the purpose of backing their protests. We then began to look with interest for that

which, according to the teaching of our Natural Histories, ought to have followed, namely, the walling-in of the sparrow by the martins and all their friends, bringing beaks full of mud and plastering it over the hole. But no such thing ever happened ; the martins never did more than make a few noisy ineffectual demonstrations. And, after all, that story in the books did not sound a very likely one. One always wondered what the sparrow, with his broad bull head and great strong beak, could have been about all the time that the walling-in was going on. We knew, of course, well enough (for we had seen it) that a nut-hatch will plaster up with mud a hole in a tree which leads to a likely nesting-place, if he deems the hole bigger than convenient ; but in that case there would be no inmate with a good beak to be reckoned with while the plastering went on.

We had to believe, too, that bees will wall-up, with bees'-wax, a snail that is injudicious enough to crawl into the hive ; for when a certain hive of bees died off for lack of a queen (a fearful example to Anarchy), we were shown a lump, looking like a great wart, on the hive's floor, and on dissecting the wart with a pen-knife, found it to contain a snail, shell and all, embalmed in bees'-wax. It was an extraordinarily fresh snail, too, considering how long it had been dead ; and that, no doubt, was due to the hermetical sealing-out of the air.

There was no difficulty in crediting this, even had we not seen it ; for a snail has very poor means of offence compared with a hive full of bees. It was very different when it came to a question of a house-sparrow against martins. The beaks of the fly-feeding birds are not weapons of war. This sparrow, at all events, that fell under our observation, was undisturbed in his forcible occupation of the martin's

castle, and brought up a flourishing family therein ; and on his children there fell a Nemesis, with perfect poetical justice. For we had a gull, a tame gull with clipped wings, who would feed on fish if we would give him any, failing fish on raw meat, failing raw meat on worms and insects, and, failing these, on anything, including sparrows. It was the most fascinating entertainment to give him an eel ; for he would toss the eel about several ways, until it came to the position most suitable for swallowing, when he would swallow it ; but the eel, not yet defeated, would often wriggle up his gullet again, and this process would be repeated many a time. So, if swallowing be a delight, the pleasure which our gull derived from the process must have been manifold. Eventually the eel would weary of the vain ascent of the gull's gullet and consent to remain in contact with the juices of digestion. Nature is a queer mother to her children.

One never knows how much the state of domesticity affects creatures that ought to be wild. In the natural state perhaps one swallowing would have been enough for the gull,—and for the eel. He was a herring-gull, and it was not until his fifth year that he arrived at the full dignity of his white and pearly plumage. Before that he was always dressed in some of the dingy, dusky feathers of infancy. Yet in their wild state these gulls are said to arrive at the adult plumage before the fifth year.

His gastronomic fondness for sparrows has been mentioned. He was also fond of mice, and with an extraordinary penchant for swallowing them alive. The interior arrangements of that bird were what an American would call a cast-iron wonder ; for consider, a mouse and a gull ! If a mouse had a fair chance of a bite and

a scratch at the outside even of a gull he would make things quite uncomfortable for the bird, and yet the gull would swallow him with perfect comfort, and digest him with unruffled pleasure. The bird would pause a moment with a laugh in his eye, to enjoy the agonised waving of the tail, when the mouse's body was already well in the entrance of the "red lane." Then down the tail went after the body, and the mouse, unlike the eel, never came back again. Generally he would catch his mice for himself, but it appealed to his subtle sense of humour to steal them from the cat. He was good friends with the cat,—a friendship based on the firm ground of mutual respect—but this did not prevent his stealing her mice. When she was engaged with one after the feline manner, letting it out of her grasp to run a foot or two, and then recovering it with a prehensile paw, the gull would come ambling up to her with every affectation of a scientific and platonic interest. He would watch the proceedings with perfect gravity for a minute or two, and it was only when the mouse, eluding the cat, was well within his reach that he would give an appreciative chuckle, at the same time stretching forward a great yellow bill cavernously open, and receive down the yellow gulf the mouse who seemed quite pleased to have discovered such a refuge. Then the cat's face became a study. She watched the waving of the tail, and, when the last sign of it had disappeared, came up nearer and examined the gull more closely. She seemed to wish to find out by outward inspection whether the mouse really was inside that queer arrangement of beak and feathers. But the gull did nothing but wink, and left the cat in so great a state of perplexity that she was no more careful than before when next the gull

sidled up to her as she was playing the game of cat and mouse.

The mice were unoffending, and there was a protest that was pathetic in the wave of the tail with which they went down; but the sparrows came of a bad race and deserved their fate. They suffered assimilation in the cast-iron interior of the gull merely as a punishment for their temerity in coming to steal his dinner. We gave him a daily dinner of scraps, besides occasional delicate morsels such as worms and fishes. These were an attraction to the sparrows, especially to those sparrows who, looking down from the vantage post of the martin's nest, could see him day by day making a dish of scraps disappear. It was tempting, no doubt, and the young sparrows fell. They had inherited burglarious tendencies, as has been shown, and they were bold young robbers. They came out into the world chirping and defiant. Had the original makers of the mud-nest succeeded in the design of bringing up therein their own family, they would have needed to have given that young family something more than encouragement before they brought them out into the world. The youngsters would have dreaded the first flight abroad, so that the parents would have been compelled to take away beakful after beakful of the nest-wall, even as they had built it up, until there was no more left but a little patch of mud on which the nestlings would no longer care to perch, but would launch themselves, half hustled against their will, into the air, and find to their surprise that they could float and skim and soar through the sky just as they saw their father and mother do. That is the nature of house-martins, so fearful are they of making their first trial.

But such was by no means the nature of the house-sparrows. These were ready, after a very little perching

and chirping on the nest-wall, to essay the long flight down on wings that would not carry them as many yards as the young house-martins' wings would carry them miles. And once on the ground they soon learned to peck for themselves in intervals of the meals brought to them by their parents, who, with all their faults, were undeniably kind to their children. And with the pecking and tasting came thoughts of the gull and of his dish of scraps, and with young appetites they hopped chirpingly towards it. The gull saw them ; he knew their intentions in a moment, and crouched, as a "thick-knee" plover crouches so as to become almost a part of the bare Norfolk ground. The little birds came on ; and already a callow bill was over the edge of the dish when a yellow yawn came rushing at the fledgling, and by the time the yawn was finished there was a young sparrow less in the world, unless the world be taken to include the cast-iron interior of our gull.

In this manner the marauding little sparrows came to a bad end,—bad for them, and bad, as might have been thought, for our gull. But it seemed as if nothing was too difficult for his digestion, and all alike agreed with him. Head-first and quite alive he swallowed any living thing that was not too large to pass his gullet, and he was looked on with favour by Authority for his service in ridding the garden of every sort of vermin. Best of all he loved small fishes, or the worms that live in the salt mud which the tide left bare ; and we spent many hours hunting, for his sake, the big-headed little fishes in the pools among the rocks, or digging, ankle-deep in the ooze, for worms in the mudbanks of the river. Even the little green crabs were not amiss to him. He would crush the armour of their backs with one dig of his great yellow bill,

peck out the soft body of the crab at his leisure and proceed to the discussion of the limbs, until nothing was left but some shelly fragments which might have been the relics of a thrush's feast around a snail-breaking stone.

On a sad morning he was found dead, rent asunder and mangled. There was little doubt about the manner of his death ; the cat had stolen upon him unawares in his sleep, and disabled him at the first onset. It seemed certain that he had been taken unawares, for the cat knew him too well to meet him in open fight. She behaved badly to him, with feline treachery ; but, after all, she had been very much tried. We were convinced it was not so much animosity, nor hunger, that moved her to treat him thus, but rather a curiosity, that was half scientific and half gastronomic, to ascertain if those mice which disappeared so quickly and so marvellously were really to be found inside him. This would explain the process of dissection to which she had subjected his body ; but it is very doubtful, knowing what one does of his digestion, if she found an atom of evidence, in the shape of unassimilated food, to satisfy her thirst for knowledge.

It was not only in the service of the gull as aforesaid that we went digging in the river-mud for the worms. Using the worms as bait, we could, at certain seasons of the year and states of the tide, catch the little sea-bass which penetrated much farther than this up the tidal river. Farther down, nearer the river's mouth, we could catch much bigger bass, throwing a fly for them from a boat, or trailing a spinning-bait behind. But such an expedition meant a walk of two miles, with the payment of a boatman and the hire of a boat at the end of it,

and thus met with no encouragement from Authority, who always looked upon fishing somewhat with the eyes of Doctor Johnson; and without the assistance of Authority the hire of boat and boatman was hard to come by.

But far out on a promontory of rock jutting into the river, not half a mile from our home, we could sit with rod and line, "a worm at one end and—" well, ourselves at the other; and, at the lowest of the tide the little silvery bass would sometimes take the worms greedily, so that we often brought home quite a good basket. There was no nonsense of playing the fish, or anything of that kind about it; the float went under, we struck, we said "Come, fish!" hoisted him into the air and swung him back, to fall with a sounding whack on the rock behind us. Then there was the joy of disengaging the fish from the hook and putting on another worm; then again, the *otium cum dignitate* of sitting and watching the float, with the proud knowledge of a fish already caught awaiting us in the basket.

The most troublesome part of this sport was the digging for the worms. Far away, by the shores of the sea, it was possible to find these worms without the trouble of digging for them in the soft, filthy ooze; for there, just where the rock-bed joined the flat golden sand, was a mass of coral-like formation. It looked much like honeycomb, only, when the comb, which was very friable, was broken, instead of bee-grubs and honey, it was seen to contain worms very like those which we got with much greater labour in the mud flats. Certainly the bass did not seem to know the difference. But if the labour of digging was saved, we had the labour of a two mile walk to reach the sandy-coral, and moreover, unless we hit off

nicely the lowest state of the tide, we found the coral covered.

This fishing for the bass was of common enough kind, nor was the capture of the bigger bass from the boat in any way unusual. Also, when Authority sometimes took us long drives and set us on the bank of a trout-stream with rod and artificial fly, the result was much hooking of clothes and of trees and very little hooking of fish; in short, such a result as the early efforts of the fly-fisher familiarly produce. But there was a fishing in which we took certain part that was rather out of the common kind. It was introduced to us by the coastguard-men, who had often practised it from ship-board.

The enterprise of certain capitalists, who had vainly sought to spoil our beautiful marshland and gorse-clad hills into a watering-place, had built an ineffectual pier out into the sea; ineffectual because, by reason of the waves, the rocks, and the ridge-boulders, it was impossible for a boat to come to it oftener than three days on an average in the year. But it was charming to bathe off. The same arrangement of rocks and weather which made it hard for a boat to come to land made the task of the coastguard almost one of supererogation. The poor men grew fat to corpulence, and it must have been weary, in the winter-time, pacing along those cliffs with never the remotest prospect of a smuggler. So then they spied this pier, and it occurred to them to fish from it as they had used to do from the ship's deck. This would help to pass the nights, for the fish bite best at night; and it was necessary that they should be kept awake in the night somehow, or they would not have been able to sleep all day.

The way of the fishing was this:—the tackle was stout and the hook large and strong, for the fish had to

be hauled from the water right up to the pier-head ; the bait was a side of herring, or one of those little big-headed fish which we caught in the pools of the rocks. As near the hook as you dared to put it was a heavy plumb of lead. The coastguard would have his line (something between the thickness of blind-cord and of a lady's little finger) lying in a coil at his feet. Then, when he had got his hook baited, and all ready, he would sing out "Stand clear !" and all of us who were tending to other lines would stand back from his scene of action. He would begin by swinging the lead-plumb to and fro like a pendulum until he had given it sufficient impetus, when he would begin to whirl it round his head, gradually letting out more line and increasing the circle, until it was flying round and round at a tremendous pace ; he would then let it go, with a whizz, as the Gauchos in our books hurled their *bolas*, and it flew hurtling out to sea, uncoiling the line as it went. Into the water it plunged with a plop, taking down with it the baited hook, and so you left it until a spasmodic pulling told your excited nerves that a foolish fish had hooked itself.

All this we saw dimly, in a mysterious gloom that heightened its interest, either by the light of the moon or, when the night was dark, by the ray of a bull's eye lantern. Sometimes, when fish would not bite,

we lowered a lantern by a rope to the water's edge, in the hope that its glare would attract the prey ; but we seldom found the fish unwilling, provided we hit off the right state of the tide,—namely an hour before or after its highest. We had about two hours and a half, in all, of profitable fishing, and in that time would have hauled up all sorts of wonders,—great big congers, skates of mighty breadth, rock-cod, and dog-fish more than enough. When the dog-fish were in great plenty we seldom caught other fish, these shark-like demons seeming to scare away the rest. These were great nights, though sometimes the wind blew cruelly ; but Authority did not often permit us to enjoy them. If the height of the tide fell early, no objections were made ; but if the fishing-hours were among the small ones of the morning a wise veto was put on our joining in the sport. In those unhappy seasons we would often stroll down in the course of the following day and, if the cold were not too nipping, would go diving down into the water at the pier's end to fetch up a dog-fish or two for our tame gull, whose healthy appetite made no distinction between the species of fishes. No one else would eat the dog-fish. The coastguard-men contented themselves with battering in their heads and throwing them over the pier-rails to serve as ground-bait ; but nothing came amiss to our gull.

THE LAST YEARS OF A GREAT MONASTERY.

THE suppression of the monasteries threatens to become a question as vexed as the motives of Cromwell or the execution of Mary Queen of Scots. For the last three hundred years or so it has been past question that the morals of a monk of the sixteenth century were darker even than those of a certain person who is generally reputed to be less black than he is painted. Now it seems that we have been all wrong, and that no one was so white as a black monk. As a matter of fact we have known surprisingly little of the internal life of a religious house during the last half century of English monasticism; and much of the little that we do know rests upon evidence that can hardly be regarded as free from suspicion. No doubt it has been clear for long enough what in theory the monastic life ought to have been, and there are ample materials for forming a judgment as to what in earlier centuries it was. But the actual details of life in a religious house during its later years, in practice as distinct from theory, the domestic economy, the spending of the income, the convent fare and the like, have as a rule been veiled by the monastic historian in a discreet silence; and it is precisely these details, as described by the monks themselves in the yearly account-rolls of the monastic officers (Obedientiaries, as they were termed) of St. Swithin's Priory at Winchester, which, thanks to the enterprise of the Hampshire Record Society and the loving labours of Dean Kitchin, we are at last able to read for ourselves.¹ For to carry

on the business of a religious house, and above all such a house as St. Swithin's with its eighteen or twenty thousand a year,² a relatively large number of officers was the rule, each in charge of his special department and each at the end of his official year rendering to the Priory auditors a scrupulously exact account of his income and expenditure. Nine out of ten of the offices (seventeen in number at St. Swithin's) were filled by the monks themselves. At their head was the Prior, presiding over and supervising the whole business of the convent.³ Next to him were his vicegerents, the second, and, when occasion required, a third and even a fourth Prior. The Sacristan took charge of the church, its furniture, plate, and vestments. The Precentor was responsible for the conduct of the services. The Warden of Works kept the buildings in repair, and carried out any needful extensions or alterations. The Treasurer received the larger half of the Priory income and acted as its general financier. The offices of the Larderer, Infirmary, Guest-master and Almoner speak for themselves. The Chamberlain found clothing and bedding. The Cellarer paid for bread, beer, and the utensils

FROM THE WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL ARCHIVES; transcribed and edited, with an introduction on the organization of a convent, by G. W. Kitchin, D.D. Hampshire Record Society, 1892.

² To save the reader the trouble of constantly raising the figures to current values, they have been multiplied throughout by twelve, the factor used by Dean Kitchin.

³ Is it necessary, after Dr. Jessop's remarks on the subject, to remind the reader that the term convent is properly not less applicable to a religious house for men than to one for women?

¹ COMPUTUS ROLLS OF THE OBEDIENTIARIES OF SAINT SWITHIN'S PRIORY, WINCHESTER,

of the house. Such at least were in theory the duties of the leading Obedientiaries at St. Swithin's; and it is their annual account-rolls, or rather a remnant of them, from which we can gain for the first time a clear idea not only of the actual details of the social life, but of the whole financial administration of a great monastery, from the Treasurer's debts under the convent-seal, down to the value of the kitchen-dripping and the cost of the Almoner's riding-boots.

Luckily, too, owing to the survival of other documents, we are able to complete the account of the metamorphosis of the Priory into the modern Cathedral body; though the story of the suppression of St. Swithin's has one decided drawback; there are in it no serious scandals,—no scandals at all in one sense. And there is no tragic termination to the monastic history; no one is hanged, drawn, and quartered, and the worst of the horrors were the cartloads of gold and silver which the Royal Commissioners carried off from the Priory church. There is no riot, not even a protest from mayor and citizens; and the practical sum total of the changes is that a number of elderly gentlemen, who left their stalls as Prior and Monks one evening, return to them as Dean and Prebendaries the next day. True, the account-rolls of St. Swithin's only apply to a single monastery; but the monastery in question was probably above the level of its contemporaries. The order to which it belonged, the Benedictines, in numbers, wealth, and influence towered head and shoulders above the other English religious communities. Whatever had been the sins and shortcomings of other monasteries, there had never been, so far as is known, any serious blemish upon the reputation of St. Swithin's. Its very position as the leading religious house in one of the leading

English cities, a stone's throw from the palace of its titular head, the Bishop of Winchester,—and that bishop usually among the ablest, always one of the most powerful English ecclesiastics,—its guardianship of what was practically the cathedral church of the diocese, were of themselves some kind of guarantee that things could hardly have been very wrong at the great Winchester Priory, and its standard no unfair criterion at any rate of its own order.

What that standard was we can gather with a fair degree of accuracy from our collection of rolls, mere salvage from the wreck though they be. Luckily a large proportion of them bear decisively upon the period in question, the last half century of the Priory's history. It is clear that times had changed greatly at St. Swithin's, and that they had by no means changed for the better. In the palmy days before the Black Death there had once been as many as sixty-four brethren in the convent. During later years the numbers had usually oscillated between thirty and forty; now there were probably, for the exact figure cannot be given, nearer thirty than two-score monks in the house in place of the ideal Benedictine total of seventy. Nor had the decline been one of numbers only. There had been a serious and permanent fall in the income, especially in the revenue from the country estates. The contributions of the faithful had dwindled to little or nothing. The pentecostals due from Surrey could not be got in at all; the receipts from the chantries were in most cases not enough to pay the expenses of service; at the high altar, even at St. Swithin's shrine itself, there were in 1536–7 no offerings whatever. In Hampshire, apparently, zeal for the old religion did not, at all events in the sixteenth century, assume a pecuniary shape. There was

not indeed anything out of the common in these phenomena. They were in a great measure due to the once prevalent mania for founding a religious house, often when, as at Selborne, there was no real local reason for its existence ; and accordingly many more convents of one kind and another had come into being than were required by any imaginable needs of the population. The difficulty would have been to find a house without some vacant stalls. Bankrupt monasteries, houses where the religious had dwindled to a couple of inmates, were by no means unknown. Compared with these St. Swithin's might fairly have met its enemies in the gate.

It was small wonder indeed that the income of St. Swithin's had declined ; the strange thing is that the decline had not been greater. The whole of its financial administration seems to a modern eye,—one might hope to the eye of a college bursar of the sixteenth century—to have been almost planned with a view to produce insolvency. Instead of the income of the convent being treated as a whole, and apportioned year by year according to the requirements of the several departments, the various estates and sources of income had been, centuries before, parcelled out among the various officers, so many to one, so many to another, and the old method had never been abandoned. Each officer had thus his own income, and each his own expenditure. A more unfortunate arrangement could hardly have been invented. It took no account of the annual variations in expenditure which must and did affect the various offices, in especial such as that of the Warden of Works, who in one year might have no more than a few roof-tiles to refasten, in the next, restorations or extensions to the amount of three or four years' income. There was small inducement to watch his expenditure in the

one case, still less hope of avoiding debt in the other. The whole character of the duties attached to an office might in the course of years completely change, but the income must remain the same. When the officer depended, as did for example the Almoner, mainly on the produce of a single estate, an accident, the breach of a sea-wall or the burning of the manorial farm, might paralyse his whole department ; for there was no definite method of meeting such a disaster. Then again, the income of the Priory was collected by half a dozen different men, each with his own little bill for the expenses of collection and the supervision of the estates, and each from time to time, as the offices changed hands, hampered by ignorance of his new duties. Worst of all, it must have been difficult in the extreme for any adequate check to be kept over the miscellaneous expenses. Such a system, or such a want of system, could hardly work well.

As a matter of fact, it worked extremely badly. To judge from the existing rolls, the Obedientiaries of St. Swithin's, notoriously wealthy as the house was, moved in an atmosphere of perpetual debt. As often as not the year's working ended in a loss ; oftener still the balance is on the wrong side. Much of this no doubt was occasioned by unavoidable claims of hospitality, for St. Swithin's stood on the high road to Southern France ; but much, one cannot help seeing, arose from sheer mismanagement. The accounts of almost every office are loaded and clogged with a list of payments mostly to the brethren, fees, stipends, courtesies (or presents of money), pitances (or extra table-expenses), compliments in the shape of wine or beer, fair-money, pocket-money, perquisites of one kind or another, which, customary as they may have been, no college auditor would dream of passing. Almost the whole of the Chamberlain's

income of over £1,000, which was supposed to be devoted to the clothing, bedding, and cleanliness of the monks, and which one would have ventured to regard as sufficient to keep some five and thirty men well-clad, well-bedded, and very clean indeed, was frittered away in these questionable payments. The Bishop, for example, received a courtesy of £12, and the Prior one of £40. The brethren have £20 each, by way of pocket-money apparently. The Chamberlain's fees for himself and servants (including the "O," or annual festival of his office) amounted to over £55. Presents of wine to the Prior, the Cellarer, the Infirmarian, the Boy-bishop, the Guestmaster, and the brethren on the mass lists, amount to £7 16s. These are only samples taken at random from a long list. The Chamberlain must have been, one cannot help thinking, an extremely popular, as well as an extremely courteous official. But there was a serious side to the question. These illegitimate payments absorbed, in the case of the six offices of which we have rolls in the late fifteenth or sixteenth century, a good eighteen per cent. of the united income. Nor, unless the book-keeping of the Priory had improved since the fourteenth century, could the Treasurer's cheerful habit of mixing up capital and income, and eking out any deficiency in the latter by the sale of some of the convent property or the grant of an annuity for cash, have tended to improve the Priory's financial position.

The accounts are by no means the only unsatisfactory feature in the life of the brethren of St. Swithin's which the rolls present to us. Scandals, we have said, there were none; but it is clear that in more things than revenue had times changed at St. Swithin's since the early days when Prior and monks alike took their turns at the plough or in the bakehouse. The

monastery itself, from being the humble abode of poor men, had become a wealthy and powerful corporation. Its head had developed into something scarcely less than a great noble, in some cases at least possessed of large private means. He had his own official residence and income, his own household in his livery, and apparently a very definite idea of the dignity which pertained to the office of Prior of St. Swithin's. We find him at one time holding his court in full state in St. Giles's Fair, at another with a train of friends and followers making a kind of progress through the monastic estates; not so engrossed in spiritual duties as to be above keeping a few couple of hounds, or turning down hares for coursing. The actual work of the house is now performed by a train of servants; the brethren are no more than the heads of their several departments. The dignity of several of them has become so weighty as to demand an official residence and household, and figures, that would have seemed strange indeed to St. Benedict, appear in the list of wages. The Larderer, it seems, cannot get on without a chaplain, a clerk, a bursar, and a groom, to say nothing of a few lesser underlings. The work of the Almoner requires among other servants a sub-almoner, a butler, and an accountant, and his annual outfit of cape, tunic, and riding boots is a serious item (£14); and yet the duties of that officer were, so far as we can ascertain, of the lightest character. The Almoner indeed was a sinner against monastic simplicity in more respects than in the costliness of his apparel. His estate of Hinton, conveniently situated some eight miles east of Winchester, was, as Dean Kitchen says, a favourite place of resort for him and his friends; and their annual expenses while staying there, over and above the fare provided by the farmer (and charged against

the Priory), were no trivial matter. Nor was the Almoner by any means alone in his periodical craving for rural pleasures.

To one familiar charge it is satisfactory to find that the brethren could plead not guilty. There was no gormandising at St. Swithin's. The serious meals of the day were two, dinner at noon and supper between six and seven; besides this there was a bowl of porridge for breakfast, and for any who desired it a cup of ale and a hunch of bread was ready in the refectory at three when the after-dinner sleep was over. The kitchen-bills, it must be allowed, are strangely heavy; £2,100 for the year's fare, exclusive of bread, beer, and wine, to a modern mind would call for liberal reductions. But if the fare was plentiful it certainly was in no sense luxurious, even at Christmas or on the festival of St. Swithin himself; and upon fast-days there is equally plain proof in the daily bills of fare that dinner and supper were each a very sorry business. Fast-days too were disagreeably numerous before the Reformation. There was not only the long season of Lent in which to subdue the wilful appetite, but all Advent and every Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday throughout the year. At such seasons the boards must have been painfully bare, for the only admissible eatables were fish, eggs, and vegetables, and upon occasion such small mercies as figs or raisins. Thus on Wednesday, November 14th, 1492, the bill of fare for the two meals was salt ling, eggs, and an entrée of oysters. On Sundays the diet was rather more liberal, two or three extra dishes of fish being added. But happily the whole year was not made up of fast-days, and for an example of an average bill of fare we may take that of New Year's Day, 1493. Upon that occasion the brethren had

for the two meals, moile (a dish of grated marrow and bread), beef and mutton, numbles (the tenderer cuts from a haunch of venison), steaks as an extra dish, and bread and beer at discretion, as our neighbours say. Sometimes instead of the moile they had brose, or toasts soaked in the dripping of the roasting meat; soup often figures as a supper dish; fish-balls, or rissoles, tansy pudding, batter, custards, calves' feet, tripe, all appear among their side-dishes. On festivals there was no more than the slightest increase in the character of the dinner; perhaps a dish of spiced vegetables and an extra entrée.

Even with these seventy-two account-rolls before one's eyes in black and white, it is difficult to understand, despite the courtesies and other payments of the kind, how some five and thirty monks contrived to get through so large an amount as £18,500 per annum. But one can be clear that there were certain objects upon which the income was not spent. It was not spent upon education. A couple of scholars at Oxford, a very few boys, sometimes not one, in the Convent-school, was all that was left of St. Swithin's zeal for learning. Nor was it spent upon the poor. It is impossible indeed to discern where at St. Swithin's the monastic poor-relief of which we hear so much comes in. One might suppose that the object of an Almoner's office is to distribute alms; but one would be quite in error in attributing such duties to the Almoner of St. Swithin's. Upon a few days in the year he gave away, as did the Anniversarian and the Prior, a good many score of loaves: he made an allowance of clothing and 3s. 6d. a week to each of the fifteen or twenty poor nuns in the Sisters' Spital, conscientiously cutting them down to half-pay when a disaster crippled his finances. The Kitchener

had no doubt a large amount of broken meats to dispose of; but so far as can be ascertained that was the beginning and end of the almsgiving of St. Swithin's.¹ As for the more serious problems of a great city, the world of misery and sin which lay outside the Convent gates, the miasma physical and moral, the sickness and disease, the vice and crime, which haunted the purlieus of a medieval city, there is not the slightest trace discernible in the rolls that the good men at St. Swithin's knew or cared anything about them. Still less was it their business to save souls. For such work there were the city parsons, not to speak of the friars. A pretty thing indeed to expect his reverence the Vice-Prior to take up with open-air preaching at the Butter Cross, or the Almoner to go exposing himself to the risk of every new case of fever in Water Lane.

The impression is in fact forced upon one that there was at St. Swithin's, model house as it may have been, in more ways than one, in the expenditure, in the social life, and in the results, a good deal that must have jarred painfully on the minds of men like Fox and Gardiner; and makes it no wonder that the one devoted to other purposes the college he had designed to found at Oxford for the monks at St. Swithin's, and that the other was turned into an ardent adherent of monastic reform. It is plain that there had been serious mismanagement in the Priory's resources; serious carelessness, too, as to running into debt. Its whole system was hopelessly and absurdly antiquated.

But that is not all, nor nearly all. It is not what the brethren did so

¹ It is, however, only fair to point out that there are in the two Treasurer's Rolls of the thirteenth century a couple of entries of sums of money given by the Prior, which may include alms in the modern sense.

much as what they failed to do, which is in fact the heaviest charge which their own accounts lay against them. The Priory had completely outgrown or had forgotten the purposes for which it had been founded. The world had been moving on: they had not only failed to move with it; they had not even stood still; they had positively receded. They ate and drank and enjoyed their pittances, their afternoon naps, and the services in their glorious church, and made merry at their O's and exchanged their courtesies, sublimely unconscious that a new England had come into being in which they were at best centres of stagnation. It is the intense pettiness, the moral feebleness of these courtesies and pittances in the days when, for example, the New Learning was struggling for existence; it is the utter failure of the house to play the part its founder had designed it to play in the national life, which moves one's indignation. And, as Chaucer's priest asked, "If gold rust, what shall iron do?" If this was the case at one of the intellectual centres of England, what was the state of the provincial convent, buried in the recesses of some remote county?

Probably the brethren of St. Swithin's felt something of this themselves. Certainly they had no opposition to offer to the royal scheme by which they were converted into a Dean and Chapter. Probably, too, the knowledge of the summary way in which the Tudor sovereigns were apt to take order with people who kicked against the pricks, was not without its effect on their deliberations. A more potent reason was the excellent terms which Bishop Gardiner had secured for them. The change was rather to be a change in name than in reality. Prior Kingsmill was to become the "first original and modern Dean"; room would be

found among the twelve Prebendaries and twelve Peticanons for such monks as cared to continue the religious life. There was no question of any change in beliefs; to some considerable extent the old common life, or as much of it as still survived, was to be kept up. There would be increased freedom certainly, and increased opportunities of usefulness. The new Chapter was to become something of a Theological College; it was to maintain twelve divinity students, pension as many old soldiers, contribute liberally to the poor and to the making of highways. Pecuniarily they would all, individually as well as collectively, rather gain than lose.

There was not a murmur of resistance to the Royal Commissioners when they arrived at the Priory in 1538. They found the Prior and all the Convent, they reported, very conformable. The Mayor and Citizens, if we are to believe the Commissioners' report, were so enthusiastic in their support of the royal intentions as to attend in person and give laud and praise to God and the King's Majesty. Conformable as the Convent might be, and well assured as their future was, it must have been a sore wrench to them to watch through the night these royal iconoclasts making an end of the famous shrine of St. Swithin's, in which the Commissioners were disgusted to find no gold nor jewels, and in the domestic portion of the Convent, owing to the foresight of the late

Prior, so little plate that they could not in common decency make it less. The Church-plate proper, crosses and images, chalices, pectorals, candlesticks, paxes, turned out better. Much of it was wrought in gold, in particular part of the high altar, which the Commissioners pulled down, grumbling sorely at their trouble, after the destruction of St. Swithin's shrine, though they were careful to protest against the imputation that they did it more for the sake of the treasure than for destroying "the abomination of idolatry." Altogether the royal treasury did not do badly. In spite of its metallic deficiencies the shrine turned out to be worth some £16,000; and the total amount of treasure which passed into the royal coffers was, 1,035½ ounces of gold, 13,886 ounces of silver gilt, and 300 ounces of silver and parcel gilt, to say nothing of certain crosses of emeralds and gold which seem to have mis-carried; in all considerably more in modern values than £75,000.

By the early months of 1541 all was at an end. The Priory and all its possessions had been surrendered to the King; and by letters patent of March 28th, 1541, St. Swithin's under its new title of the Church of the Holy Trinity, purged of its "idolatry" and with the great bulk of its old estates and something more regranted to it, was free to enter upon the career of enlarged usefulness which had been marked out for it.

GIUSEPPE PARINI.

NONE can say where History begins ; and, once begun, her page has no full stops. But we may deem Charles the Fifth a sort of semicolon in the history of Europe ; or we may liken him to a forest clearing whence many paths diverge, or to which they converge if we shift the point of view. He is an epoch-marking man in the story of the nations, especially in that of Italy. It was in his time that she began to be what she has ceased to be in ours, a geographical phrase. To Milan and its territory, called of old the Milanese, this wide-ruling potentate played the part of a kind of deputy-providence or fate. When settling the affairs of Italy at the grand congress of Bologna towards the end of 1529 he treated Francis the Second, the last of the Sforzas, Dukes of Milan, as a mere puppet, under whose reign he took good care to govern. And to tighten his hold upon this puppet he wedded him to his niece Cristina, daughter of Christian the Second of Denmark by Elizabeth of Austria, Charles's sister. The marriage was solemnised in the spring of 1534, the bride being fifteen years old, the bridegroom forty-two, and so broken in health that he had to hobble to the altar on crutches. Still poor Milan did her best to welcome the young bride, whom she regarded as a harbinger of peace and of better days after the long and cruel wars that had unpeopled the Milanese and made it a howling wilderness where the wolves ranged the fields at will, and the grapes hung rotting on the vines for lack of hands to pluck them.

But the Duke Francis, who married with one foot in the grave, died with-

in little more than a twelvemonth after his wedding, and with him died the promise of peace. For Francis the First of France coveted Milan as eagerly as Charles the Fifth, and said with cynic wit : " My brother Charles and I are quite at one. Each ardently desires the same thing,—Milan." Hence came fresh plots, new quarrels, more wars, and, above all, heavier taxes. Then followed divers schemes for reconciling Charles's claims with those of Francis. Among these was a scheme for marrying Charles's daughter or niece to a son of the French king. But here came a hitch. Francis insisted that his second son should be the happy man ; Charles insisted that the third son should be preferred, lest the death of the first (the Dauphin) should make the second both King of France and Duke of Milan. Neither would give way. The venerable Pope Paul the Third strove to make peace between the rival sovereigns, and at last it was decided that Charles should give his daughter Donna Maria to the Duke of Orleans. But within a few days of the time fixed for the wedding the Duke died. The blow broke the spirit of the French monarch, old before his time and pressed by the arms of England. And finally, on July 5th, 1546, Charles gave the Duchy of Milan to his son Philip, well known to us as the husband of our Queen Mary Tudor.

Thus did Milan become Spanish, and Spanish she remained for one hundred and sixty-seven years, till the unwieldy Empire of Spain was broken up by the Peace of Utrecht in

1713, when Milan passed to the House of Hapsburg. Meanwhile those years of Spanish rule had made a deep and lasting impression on all her ways of life and modes of thought ; so that she was half Spanish at the date of the birth of Parini, the subject of this hasty sketch.

He was born in the year 1729, in the village of Bosivio, some twenty miles north of Milan, where his father owned a few acres of ploughland, pasture, and vineyard. The boy, christened Giuseppe (in plain English Joseph) soon showed a marked taste for literature, and this induced his father to sell his acres and flit to Milan, for the sake of giving the lad the best training within his reach. The crafty man seems to have acted on the old and not wholly trustworthy adage,

When house and land are gone and spent,
Then learning is most excellent.

But much depends on the kind of learning, and as a bread-winner the craft of shoemaking has generally been found superior to that of making verses of any kind. Accordingly we find Parini in after years begging the loan of ten sequins from a certain Canon Agudio, in the following rhyme :

As for the luck of a mass to say,
God knows when that may come my way ;
And of friends in need I know not one
To reach me a helping hand under the sun.
My mother, poor mother, has none but me
To stand between her and misery ;
And unless from you you let me borrow,
I shall lack a crust to give her to-morrow.

This fragment incidentally shows that Parini had become a priest without a benefice, willing to keep the wolf from the door by chanting a chance mass ; just as there are in the Anglican Church of this island a few clergymen unattached who pick up a precarious livelihood by undertaking

roving duty. Meanwhile, in his twenty-third year Parini published a volume of poems under the name of *Ripano Emilio* ; and this juvenile performance, whatever its intrinsic worth, served to bring him into notice, and earned him the patronage of sundry noble families, notably that of the Borromei and Serbelloni, who employed him to teach some of their scions. Thus, and as a writer of what we now call society-verses, the young priest contrived to keep himself from starving.

In his appearance he was tall and had a broad forehead, lively large dark eyes, an aquiline nose, with shapely features to match, a frank and open expression, and a sweet and sonorous voice. Altogether he was a man of commanding presence, and he walked with such peculiar grace and dignity that when the Emperor Leopold the Second came to Milan to see the capital of his Italian heritage, he was so struck by the then elderly poet's appearance that he asked his name, and, being told, ordered a carriage to be kept for him at the public cost. The municipality, however, seem to have thought that the Emperor had no right to be generous with their revenues. Anyhow the poor poet never got his carriage, but went on footing it gracefully to the end of his days. With Emperor, as with meaner mortals, the adage holds good,

"Tis money makes the mare to go ;

and these Emperors of Germany, of the first breed, were always pinched for money, from the days when the luckless Charles the Fourth was arrested for the sum total of his butcher's bill at Worms.

The Austrian governors of Milan found they had their work cut out for them, for the city had been so long under the sceptre of Spain that she

rebelled at the yoke of the Teutons. However, they seem to have done their best, according to their lights, for the welfare of the people whom they ruled. Firmian, the best of all these Teuton governors, took a fancy to Parini, and did his best to befriend him, though sometimes with more zeal than discretion. He began, for instance, by making Parini editor of the official Gazette. Parini, too, we doubt not did his best in that capacity ; yet we fear that the printers suffered keenly under the rule of this poetical editor. Once, when at the eleventh hour the Gazette ran short of copy, Parini met the demand by inventing and publishing as the latest news from Rome, a full and circumstantial statement that the reigning Pope, Clement the Fourteenth (Ganganelli), had resolved to stop the time-honoured practice of fitting male singers to sing *soprani* parts in the papal chapel by the cruel means so long in vogue, and said to have been invented by Semiramis. The hoax succeeded beyond all expectation. The LEYDEN GAZETTE reprinted it ; and thence it spread all over Europe. Everybody praised the Pope's humanity ; and Voltaire, the grand sceptic of the age, was so completely deceived by Parini's pious fraud that he sent the Pope a hearty letter of congratulation.

Probably Governor Firmian now discovered that his client's gifts did not lie in the way of editing a newspaper ; and we soon find him engaged in the far more congenial task of lecturing on the fine arts at the Palatine School of Milan, where a new professorship had been created expressly for him, in spite of the stubborn opposition of his foes the Jesuits. Afterwards, when the Jesuits were for a season suppressed, Parini was appointed Professor of Rhetoric at the Brera, and this post he held as long as he lived, acquitting himself to

the satisfaction of all who heard him. Read now-a-days, no doubt, his lectures seem as shallow and meagre as Blair's *BELLES LETTRES* or Lord Kames's *ELEMENTS OF CRITICISM* ; but we should, in justice to these men, remember that they were pioneers, and that those who have profited by their labours ought to be the last to laugh at their shortcomings.

Parini now spent his leisure hours in the company of the aristocracy of Milan. The manners and morals of the Italian city exhibited at that time a strange compound of Spanish ignorance, sloth, formality, and pride of birth with a dash of French frivolity and licence of the newest fashion, which the Austrian governors vainly strove to check by stringent legislation, thereby only aggravating the evil they meant to cure. They wrought mischief with the best of intentions, like other governments before their time and since.

Literature, meanwhile, was not neglected by the leisured classes of Milan. They read poetry, and they wrote it. One bard penned a sonnet on each of the hundred invocations in the Litany of the Virgin Mary. Another aimed a hundred sonnets at the head of a man to whom he owed three shillings. A third poured forth five dozen sonnets on a miser, describing them on the title-page as written by Sir Lullo, Sir Lallo, and Sir Lello, annotated by Sir Lollo, and dedicated by Sir Lillo. One learned Society held its meetings with a child for chairman, to whom they propounded all sorts of abstruse problems, and who was instructed to answer each question with one word. Then these solemn triflers would choose two of their number to demonstrate that the chairman's one word solved the question propounded, or at least pointed straight to the right solution of it. Verse, however was the chief business

of the society with whom Parini mingled, among them, but not of them; verses on births, deaths, and marriages, christenings, confirmations and first communions; on a nun's taking the veil, or a nun's mother taking a new *cicisbeo*; on a young priest's first sermon; on a lady's pet, or a gentleman's bet, or a beauty's shifting her patches. Two whole volumes once came forth on the death of a favourite cat; albeit the poet (to give him his due) showed himself conscious of the frivolity of this flood of rhyme he had helped to swell. One of his stanzas runs:

An Iliad written
On the death of a kitten
In rhymes that are faultless, if not very new,
May teach you musicians,
Players, poets, physicians,
To prize at its worth the verse lavished on
you.

In those days the pulpit competed with the stage in the art of entertaining. One sermon, still extant, contains a full and elaborate description of all the fashionable dances of the period, and a lively delineation of the manners of the dancers. And one famous Jesuit preacher, Father Granelli, would often interrupt his sermon to pay an appropriate compliment to any person of distinction who chanced to enter the church while he preached; and would then calmly resume the thread of his discourse just as if nothing had happened.

Under the long rule of Spain the custom of forcing the superfluous daughters of high families to become nuns had grown almost universal at Milan. Whether destined for the veil or not, all high-born damsels received their schoolings within the walls of a nunnery, where they were deliberately taught to regard a cloistered life as the happiest of all lives for a woman. This training seldom missed

its aim. But it did sometimes; and we read of a young Milanese lady, forced to take the veil, greeting her parents with a storm of curses through the grating of the convent-parlour, and then strangling herself with her girdle before their eyes. Marriages for love being inconsistent with the system thus indicated, the girl who did not take the veil was brought out of her convent-school to be mated to a man whom she had probably never seen, and who was often as old as her grandfather. Hence the well-known institution of the *cicisbeo*. Lord Byron was the *cicisbeo* of the Countess Guiccioli, whose husband, thrice her age, had no hold on her heart whatever; but he felt himself aggrieved because his wife and her chosen friend defied the standing rules and regulations of the order. For such rules it had; and, these duly observed, nobody thought any the worse of a married dame for taking a *cicisbeo*. On the contrary, she was despised if she lacked one; the institution was indeed so fully recognised that the name of the bride's future *cicisbeo* was often inserted in the marriage-settlement. And once chosen, he might not be lightly discarded; infidelity of this stamp exposed the lady to social ostracism.

The *cicisbeo's* duties were many and arduous. He was expected to attend his lady's *levée*, and bring her the day's news; to keep an eye upon her servants; to accompany her to the church, to the ball-room, to the theatre, and to carry her prayer-book, fan, or scent-bottle, as the case might be. Meanwhile his own wife would be receiving all these attentions from some other lady's husband; and no one thought a whit the worse of any of the three parties to the arrangement. Society was scandalised only when the wife proved false to the lover.

Many writers (Dr. Johnson's Italian friend Baretti among them) have laboured to prove that the custom was perfectly innocent; and innocent in one narrow sense it may have been. Nevertheless sturdy John Bull shakes his head at this systematic philandering, and regards it as anything but harmless, even if technically innocent. And as Philosophy also shakes her grave pate at the whole business and the social system out of which it grew, the reader will probably judge that John Bull, for once at least, is perfectly right.

The dress of any period is always a matter of interest to women and to wise philosophers. The Milanese dress of this period, before French fashions invaded it, was fearfully and wonderfully made and weighty to wear. The women robed themselves in brocades and silks so solid and substantial that a dress would last a lifetime, and sometimes descend from mother to daughter; such also were the coats and waistcoats of the sterner sex, who strutted about in their unbending garments like so many hogs in armour. Consistently with this style of dress, the hair of both sexes underwent the most elaborate treatment at the hands of the artist thereunto addicted; an architect in his way who delighted to build the lofty pile of tresses, tier above tier aspiring to the skies. Then came the powdering; an art by itself, perfected by a genius of the age who devised what may be called, without figure of speech, the powdering-chamber, from whose perforated ceiling the powder fell like snow from the heavens. Every well-appointed mansion had its powdering-room. The patient, released at length from the hands of the hairdresser, entered the room, wrapped from neck to foot in an ample sheet. The floury shower began to fall, and within a few

minutes the patient emerged, half choked, but beautiful to behold as a cabbage covered with hoar-frost, and not a hair disarranged upon his sacred head.

A long chapter might be written on hairdressers, their rights and wrongs and revolutions; but they have always been staunch Tories in their hatred of wigs. England had her wig-riot in the reign of George the Second; Milan had hers in the reign of Maria Teresa. It arose from an audacious attempt by some restless innovator to cover every fashionable head in Milan with a wig of steel or silver wire, warranted to save some three hours' daily toil and endurance in the dressing of the hair. Up rose the hairdressers like one man, and petitioned the Empress to save them from the threatened ruin of their art. The Empress listened to their prayer, and straightway decreed that any one wearing one of these new-fangled peri-wigs must pay a fine of fifty sequins or be thrice scourged in public. She further empowered the police to search private houses for the offending article, and to destroy it if found. To this imperial legislation Goldoni alludes in the doggerel lines:

In that great day it came to pass
That a gentle countess was forced, alas !
For her hairdresser's sake to forgo her mass.

He kept her too long at her toilet.
Ten years later another satirist published an ACCOUNT OF A PRODIGIOUS COMET LATELY SEEN AT MILAN, the comet being a transcendent specimen of the hairdressers' art, erected on the head of a certain noble dame.

Along with these eccentricities of costume went others to match, such as the carrying of two watches, two handkerchiefs, two snuff-boxes, two everythings capable of duality. "All was twofold in those blessed times," says a contemporary writer. "Even

the watches reposed in a double case, which made much work in winding up at bedtime." This entertaining writer, a sort of Milanese Pepys, singles out the priests as the most ceremonious of all classes in customs, habits, and ideas. These were the unattached priests known to the French as the *abati au petit collet*, among whom Metastasio holds the most conspicuous place in literary history. But Parini deserves a place by his side. While Metastasio,—a wiry little man with a ferret eye and a brown wig of corkscrew curls atop of his wizen pock-pitted face—haunted the Court of Vienna, Parini, as unlike him in outward aspect as a falcon to a sparrow, dwelt at Milan in high favour with Maria Theresa's deputy, Governor Firmian, and much caressed by all the leaders of fashion in that cathedral city. But, in him they had unwittingly admitted a traitor within their charmed, and charming, circle; a spy who was slyly, but busily taking notes of every folly, vice, and absurdity that caught his eye as he sauntered to and fro among those gay lords and ladies. But though he might safely take notes, and even shape them into polished satire, to print them was quite another matter. Nothing could be more alien to the stereotyped theory of the ruck of Austrian Governors of Milan than to tolerate an attack on the existing system that would set society seething and bubbling with wrath. *Quieta non movere* was the ruling maxim of these worthy men. Governor Firmian, however, happened to be a man of other mould, and when a friend whispered to him that his favourite Parini had penned the first part of a satirical poem entitled *THE DAY*, intended to be a minute and faithful portraiture of the daily life of a Milanese noble, and, further, that the poet thought of publishing his work, the Governor promptly replied:

"So much the better. I'm sure some such work is sorely needed."

Accordingly, forth came *THE MORNING*, and woke all the world of Milan to a sense of the utter emptiness and nullity of the life that all the world was leading. Meanwhile as in the case of *NICHOLAS NICKLEBY* half a dozen Yorkshire schoolmasters vowed vengeance against Dickens for libelling them as Squeers, so now every exquisite in Milan declared that the silly hero of *THE MORNING* was a caricature of himself. And one of them, the Prince Belgioioso of that age, a dandy of the dandies, felt so sure that the cap fitted his peculiarly brainless noddle, that he warned Parini against continuing the poem, as he would not live to see the evening of that day when *THE NOON* appeared. But though this meant in plain English, "I'll hire a band of cut-throats to murder you," and the threat was no idle one in those evil days, Parini did not flinch. His *MORNING* had its *Noon*, its *EVENING*, and its *NIGHT*. His *DAY* saw its completion, and the author of it died in his bed.

Much has been written in Italy touching the style and diction of Parini's masterpiece. We English hold these matters cheap, maybe too cheap, though 'tis a fault on the right side. But Parini had to encounter special difficulties that lend a certain serious interest to the vexed question whether he did well to discard his native Milanese, his cradle-tongue, in favour of pure Tuscan. Great is the charm of that cradle-tongue to a Milanese. And one need not be a Scotsman to feel with the lady from the shores of Lake Como, who, dining in Paris side by side with her compatriot the brave Confalioneri, was afterwards congratulated by a friend on having enjoyed a good bout of Italian chat. "Far better than that," she replied. "Con-

falioneri and I have been talking Milanese.' Parini would surely have echoed that sentiment ; but he wished to command a wider circle of readers for his masterpiece than he could hope for had he penned it in a provincial dialect ; hence his choice of pure Tuscan. At the same time he felt it was a choice of evils. The language of Tasso does not readily lend itself to the treatment of the trivial incidents and paltry matters Parini had taken for his theme. It is far too stately, and, truth to tell, too hidebound and too poor. The Classicists had purified it into poverty ; and that so effectually that, during the tyranny of these terrific purists, the need of uttering the vulgar word "handkerchief" was deemed an almost insuperable bar to placing a version of OTHELLO on the Italian stage. Even so, we may add, was it in France before the victory of Victor Hugo and his brother Romantics. The Classicists could not stand Othello's handkerchief decorously disguised as *bandeau* by the discreet

Ducis. But when Alfred de Vigny, greatly daring, frankly Frenched it *mouchoir* in his version, the actor had to face such a storm when he uttered the forbidden word as might have scared the valiant Moor himself. By way of evading the kindred difficulty that lay in his path, Parini resolved to adopt the mock-heroic style, and part of his glory consists in the skill he displays in sustaining it throughout a poem of between three and four thousand lines without wearying the reader.

One word in conclusion. We venture to think that Parini's satire has been unduly neglected by English students of Italian literature. No one, of course, would dream of ranking him among the great masters of Italian poetry ; but THE DAY is an unimpeachable authority for the language, and its subject throws a clear light on one of the factors of modern Italy. This claim, we submit, cannot be urged on behalf of Petrarch or Tasso, of Ariosto or Alfieri.

THE MEN OF THE HILLS.

THE Vale of the Upper Tweed is distinct from the neighbouring dales of Clyde and Annan, and no less from the rich strath into which the Border river enters in its maturer course, in a way which may seem strange to one superficially aware of their proximity. You pass almost at a bound from the fat lands of Dumfries, or the wooded holms of Melrose, to a country of miniature and yet greater beauties. There you have wide vistas and broad streams ; here we have vistas, waters, hills, woods, an epitome of landscape, small in the acreage of the surveyor, but large by that curious measurement which is the prerogative of the mind of man. It is indubitably a country of surprises, a dapper arrangement of landscapes which charm by their contrast. The cotter's garden, gay with all seasons' flowers, runs into the heather ; reapers ply their trade within hearing of the thrush and the curlew ; a meadow of hay is own neighbour to a grim pine-forest ; and a sullen stream in one field may be an eddying torrent in the next. The art of the epigrammatist would be expended in vain in searching for the applicable word. One might call it austere, but for the grace of the woods ; barren, but for the fresh green meadows and fruitful gardens ; homely, were it not for some great blue shoulder of hill which bars the sky and gives solemnity to the little ridges. It is a country of contradiction, blended into harmony by that subtle Border charm which relates the crags of Moffatdale to the lowlands of Berwick.

The people of this Arcady are in certain ways akin to their country-side. They, too, are full of surprises. Harshness and gentleness, worldly

prudence and the most insane recklessness, humour and a crass stupidity, unite in varying degrees in their composition. In these narrow valleys tragedy and comedy dwell side by side in a confusion as grotesque as any *Wonderland*, and to the seeing eye there are plays enough acted every day of the year. To the casual traveller there is incongruity, to the man who has long known them there is none ; for he feels each whimsicality of character to be the artistic companion of the variant landscape.

Celtic and Saxon meet here, but Saxon has the predominance. Apart from such far-away histories there is one near and living fact of their genealogy. Their forefathers were those gallant gentlemen or disreputable ruffians (call them what you please) who played fine havoc with well-stocked Northumbrian pastures ; who, and here is the sad part of the tale, so far forgot themselves as now and then to plunder their Scots brethren. Days and nights of riding, when a false step may be death, make a man's senses wonderfully acute. He learns to use his wits, which is well nigh a lost art among us ; he becomes versed in the lore of woodcraft and hillcraft ; he can mark a glimmer of spears six miles away, and the saddle is more easy to him than his bed. Such a trade is not over good for morality, save for the virtue of courage which it undeniably tends to foster ; but it is the very finest school in the world for the natural man. The folk of Tweed-side to-day are sprung of this fighting stock. The fathers had little time to settle on their lees and sink into the country lout ; and the children in consequence are of keener temper and

finer spirit than the ordinary rustic. The difference is vividly seen when one looks at the Westland folk who have come from the remoter lands of Ayr and Lanark to settle by the Tweed. Honest and worthy, courageous and kindly, they lack few of the sterling virtues of life; they manage their farms with commendable industry; they fear God and do good in their several ways. But to set them on a level with the true-born Uplander is to rate butter-milk as high as burgundy. It is conceivable that at certain times the former may be the more salutary diet, but this cheap quality of wholesomeness does not make the estimate any the more true. To this day you may find a certain enmity between the two strains, dislike on the one hand and distaste on the other.

To the chance traveller in their midst that which appears the most prominent quality of the people is their singular acuteness of mind. To call them cultured or learned would be to brand them with an undeserved reproach. They have indeed something of a contempt for book-learning; the Scots phenomenon known as a "dungeon of wit" meets with less respect among them than elsewhere. The Book of Life is a volume which makes all printed matter of small significance. But in native shrewdness we should venture to set one of them against any other average inhabitant of the globe. Two well-known Scots philosophers, both sprung from humble origin, hailed from this place; but they are types and not exceptions. You may see any day, behind the plough or on the shearing-stool, men with faces as ponderously thoughtful as an Aquinas. This may seem an exaggerated picture, but we fancy it is not far from the truth. To be sure this intellectuality of countenance is often deceptive, and its possessor may have no thought above whisky or

mole-catching; but again it is not unfrequent; only the index of the sagacity and gravity within.

It is curious to note the floating fragments of learning which perambulate the countryside, stories derived, we know not whence, often strangely marred in the telling, but hinting at some share of the humanities (to use the fine Scots word) which was the possession of some prior generation. One old woman of our knowledge had a distant acquaintance with some of the tales in the *ODYSSEY*. She surprised us on one occasion by declaring that her son's socks were no better than Penelope's web (she did not sound the last letter of the virtuous queen's name), for what she mended in the morning was a hole again at night. She had never heard of Homer; the story was just an "overcome," which she had got from her mother. Still stranger was the tale which another was wont to tell as a warning to those who take pride in ugliness, dirt, and poverty. There were once two men, she would say, a farmer and a ploughman, the one rich and the other poor, the one humble and the other proud as Satan. One day the ploughman came to the farmer's home in his muddy boots, and was taken to the best room, where there was a very fine carpet. He had no sooner entered than he stamped his clogs upon the floor with every circumstance of scorn. "There," said he, "I trample on the pride of *Platto*,"—*Platto* was the farmer's name. "Ay," says the other, "but with still greater pride." This is no less than the story of Diogenes and Plato, but the teller had no inkling of its source. "Did you ever hear of any one whose name was *Platto*?" we asked. "No," she said, "but,—well, there's folk called *Latto*, and *Platto* will just be an auld way of writing it."

Dr. Penicuik of Romano, who

wrote a book on Tweeddale in the beginning of last century, did full justice to the good qualities of the folk, but added that there was one curious defect in all,—a total lack of music; “For,” he says, “music is so great a stranger to their temper, that you will hardly light upon one amongst six, that can distinguish one tune from another.” We combat the assertion root and branch, and cannot help suspecting that the worthy Doctor had himself no very shrewd ear for music. No people who had not a true love and gift for melody could have produced so many fine airs, and their written songs, though few in number, are yet choice of their kind. To cite one instance, there is that excellent drinking song, “Come sit ye doon, my cronies,” which we would willingly set down were not our memory so feeble.

But to pass to graver themes; there is one side of Scots life which no man can afford to neglect, though of late years it has rather been thrust down our throats. We mean the religious. It is a fine thing to say of any folk that their religion fills a large place in the world of their thoughts. But in the Border country we venture to think that it is weighted with a healthy worldliness, so much so that frequently it disappears from the surface altogether. For, say what we may, the men of the uplands are on the whole a worldly people. Explain it as you like by their descent or by their countryside, the fact remains. They are not the stuff of which fanatics are made; the temporal and the tangible are too much before their eyes. For this very reason in the days of the Covenanters and the Persecution the Peeblesshire men did not rise like the Westland Whigs. The fugitives in the Tweedside hills were mostly men from Annandale or gaunt-faced wanderers from the moors of

Clyde. To be sure there were Habb Dab and David Din, who “dang the Deil ower Dobson’s linn,” and who might have been expected to save the reputation of the place. These two worthies, hiding in a cave at the head of Moffat Water, were assailed by Satan in the guise of a pack of dried hides, and being strong in the faith they promptly kicked him over the waterfall. As the song has it:

Like a pack of barkit skins
Doon fell Satan ower the Linns.

But from the very fact of their supernatural intercourse it is to be inferred that these were the exceptions, and that the zeal of the arch-enemy to convert them may be attributed to a laudable desire on his part to keep the countryside consistent. It would be a hard task to rouse the people over any mere matter of scrupulousness, any nicety of ceremonial or refinement of Church-government. We have in our midst a sprinkling of earnest Whigamores, but almost to a man they are of alien birth. The true Uplander conceives it to be a matter of little moment whether priest or presbyter chide his erring steps, or whether he worship his Maker on his knees or on his feet.

Yet to call them a godless race would be to make a vast mistake. They are a devout people according to their light, which after all is not inconsiderable. In their daily life they are punctilious in the observance of certain minutiae of the law, though when pressed they will admit that they scarce see the reason of their conduct. The reason, we take it, is their deep-rooted conservatism, holding to the old customs as far as possible because their fathers did so and their grandfathers before them. They are in general excellent attendants on the Kirk, coming down from their distant glens with grave, decent faces, sitting

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like statues through a sermon which may be mere pulp to their strong brains, and returning home with a sense of duty fulfilled. They will rarely speak ill of a minister, believing, like George Herbert, that any want of appreciation on their part is due to the hardness of their hearts, which is a charming doctrine for the preacher. On the matter of the Sabbath, too, you will find them rigid with a most whimsical and pertinacious rigidity. One man of good character but no pretensions to piety made the writer's boyhood a burden by forbidding the reading of any secular book on the Saturday, Sabbath, or Monday. "For," said he, "though there's naething in the Bible about it, I hold that the Lord's day shall aye get plenty of room to steer in."

Nor are the humours which attend the Church in Scotland wanting here. There was the minister of Tweedsmuir who on a certain Sabbath found a salmon stranded in shallow water, and who, being unable conscientiously to take it out on such a day, built a hedge of stones around it, and returning on the morrow claimed his prize. There was the old farmer who could not go to the Kirk because he had neglected to shave on the Saturday night, and he would not profane the day by the use of any edged tool. There was the minister of Broughton who prayed for dry weather in the midst of a perfect downpour, and when notwithstanding his prayers the great blasts of rain still beat on the window, exclaimed in his aggravation, "Lord, Lord, but this is maist reedeklous!" There is the story of the eminent Dr. Robertson the historian, who preached an eloquent sermon in the kirk of Peebles, but forgot that the door was just behind the pulpit. He concluded in a whirl of rhetoric and gracefully sank back upon his seat; but the door was open

and the congregation saw only the heels of the orator as he disappeared down the back stairs. There is no limit to such tales save the memory of the narrator and the patience of his hearers.

We have said that there still exists in no inconsiderable measure the old fighting Border spirit, as dour as steel and as quick as a stream in flood. Few opportunities now remain for its appearance, for peace broods like a shadow over the land and fines for the breach of it are not desirable. But one outlet exists in an election contest. Politics to these folks are a matter of the most vital importance. We know from Lockhart that not even his age, ill health, and great name could save Sir Walter from insult at the hands of a Jedburgh mob. A man seriously adopts his party, not without grave consideration, for he knows that it will bring him lifelong hostility from the other side. There is no half-hearted hob-nobbing with the enemy. Each sticks to his camp, and if by any chance he sees fit to change it he will be pursued with such a storm of contumely as may make him wish himself back with a hearty good-will. Family ties are of no moment in the matter. We have heard of a farmer of undoubted respectability and a large kindness whose own brother, just dead, had been of the opposite persuasion. He was talking gleefully of the decrease of the enemy in the place where his brother had lived. "There were a terrible lot o' Tories," he said, "and we were sairly bothered wi' them; but our Maker was very merciful to us and took a guid wheen o' them to Himsel'."

There is something Spartanlike in this devotion on one side, but there is something little short of demoniac on another. The sight of the country town on an election day, when, contrary to all hopes, the Tory candidate

has been returned, is one which a man will remember all his days. The proletariat are deeply conservative in nature, but for no earthly reason they are Whig to a man by profession. They fill the street, a crowd of brown determined faces, howling profanity. The result is announced ; there is Bedlam for twenty minutes, then a mighty rush, and the honourable gentleman and his escort escape gracefully by a back close. Windows are shattered and a few heads broken ; there is much marching and shouting ; then the excitement calms by degrees, and by and by the men go home, very wearied, sometimes very drunk, and perhaps also a trifle ashamed.

But a more agreeable proof of their spirit is the catholic fondness for sport which is common to both high and low. There is something admirable in this liking, for sport in itself is a good thing. It brings out all the virile and sterling qualities of a man ; it leaves little room, it is true, for some virtues, but it keeps the ground against the more unmanly vices. The true sportsman is a prince of good fellows ; and by the name we do not mean a good shot or a skilled rider, but a man who has a love for motion and the open air, and the two valuable qualities of courage and self-repression. It is indeed this element of sport which redeems many characters. A poacher may be a blackguard in very truth, but he would be a worse man if he were not a poacher. In him, too, is that love for danger and enterprise, that skill of hand and lore of nature, which go to ennoble his betters in the trade. To us it is something affecting to see the ragged weaver, out of work maybe, up to his knees in the stream intent upon his fishing, the herd-boy who whips the mountain-burn with his home-made rod, the village grocer who gets a day's shooting now and then from the laird.

They love it, and are learned in it above the common. It would be a blessing to the land if this love were infused into all sorts and conditions of men, and the wealthy landowner would give the humbler tenants a share in the sport on his estate if they sought it, and the great merchant would set his poor, town-bred clerks to fish his waters, instead of filling his country houses with people who scarcely thank him.

Again, this common taste sets all classes on a level. The curling-pond is a fine instance, where the laird, the minister, the farmer, and the labourer used to meet on a common ground. We well remember one man, the sheriff of a county, a scholar and a gentleman of birth, whose bosom friend on such excursions was one Rob Tait, an inveterate poacher. The sheriff would be *skip* and Rob was beyond all question a most noted player. "Come on, Rob, my man," he would say ; "show us what ye can dae. Eh, man, but that's great ; that's the kind o' shot ye read about in books. There's no your match in a' the countryside. I love ye like a brother, Rob." A week later the speaker would be on the Bench, and the great player arraigned before him for some one of his manifold offences. "Robert Tait, sixty days," would come the sentence in cold, judicial tones ; and Rob would take it all in good part as from a friend, knowing that when he came out from prison and the winter returned there would be no estrangement.

So much for the broad characteristics of the people, but what of the multitudinous interests and details of their daily life, their trades and professions, the little social ranks among them, the countless acts and scenes in the drama of their lives ? It would need a new Sir Walter to do them justice, unless perchance the

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Laird of Abbotsford has done it already. It is a fact of some celebrity that a man from Tweedside loves his native valleys with a love so indiscriminating that it will admit no rival. The story of the nameless enthusiast who refused to have the mud of Tweeddale cleaned from his shoes, proves the affection which the gray old-fashioned land can inspire. So for one with a flying pen to venture to depict its *arcana* is a presumption more rash than that of the men who sought to carve the Koran on a nutshell.

There is a great variety of character, but scarcely, we think, much choice of trades. Life is simpler there than elsewhere, and men have only a few narrow paths wherein to direct their energy. There are the farmers, slow-spoken and hard-headed, hospitable, kindly, with little of the cloddishness of their brother of the lowlands; the herds and labourers, big men, clad in the "shadow'd livery of the burnished sun," reserved of speech, humorous, and silently contented; the more volatile folk of the towns who have seen more of the world and are sharper in their talk; lastly the dregs of the people, the poachers and black fishers, sullen fellows enough but amusing if you take them aright, and full of stories as Chaucer's pilgrims. Then there is the leaven in the lump, the lairds and ministers and country doctors, and the wealthier townsfolk, provided always they be of the true indigenous stock and not alien settlers.

But there is a dark side to the picture, one which can be shown of every community on the face of the earth. They have all the virtues of a high-spirited, high-handed race, and, let us add, not a few of its vices. The old description of the county town as "droughy and God-fearing" holds true, unless the former attribute has overwhelmed the latter. A

thirsty place it is and a thirsty people, as any one will declare who has witnessed a market-day or a convivial gathering. The old punch-drinking times have not quite gone from the land. To be sure the men have strong heads and vast capacities, and what would make a speedy end of an urban bibulist is to them but milk and water. But it is playing with fire and does not always keep within bounds; and the end too often is much dismal and sordid tragedy.

The riff-raff of the place, the ne'er-do-wells and outcasts, are the main upstays of riot and debauch. Stories could be told of queer doings among these ragged, sunburned fellows, who spend their time in and out of jail. The salmon-poaching in the close season is the refuge of the vagrant and unsettled part of the community. It is hazardous in the extreme, for the waters are often swollen high, and men in the pursuit of sport have no care of their lives. The bailiffs, too, are keen-eyed and always on the watch, so that the game is pursued under the ban of the law and the hazards of the weather. "Firing the water," as it is called, consists in flaring torches, made of pine-knots or old barrel-staves dipped in tar, over the surface of the river, and so attracting the fish. Who does not remember the inimitable scene at Charlieshope in *GUY MANNERING*? The *leister* with its barbed prongs is a deadly weapon in a skilful hand, but in the use of it a novice is apt to overbalance himself and flounder helplessly in the wintry stream. The glare of light on the faces of the men, the leaping fish, the swirl of the dark water, the black woods around, the turmoil of the spot in contrast with the deathly quietness of the hills, the sack with its glittering spoil, the fierce, muffled talk, are in the highest degree romantic. Then, when the

sport is over for the night, and if by a lucky chance they have escaped unmolested, they will often return to some cottage, and there with barred door and shuttered windows boil a fish, sup the *broo*, and finish with deep potations of whisky. But if some bailiff meets them, then Nemesis has them by the heels, and they make the best of their way to the county jail if they lack money to pay the fine. If, as sometimes happens, the might of the law be the weaker, a sharp scrimmage may ensue, some heads may be broken, and the band will scatter in hot haste to their homes. But we live in civilised times, when violence is sure to recoil upon the head of the transgressor ; and sooner or later they will be brought to book for their misdeeds, and have leisure to repent in the quiet of a prison.

There is, indeed, among the people a good deal of what sentimentalists name the Woodland Pan, what plain people call the old Adam, or plainer still, the Devil. But where does this not exist ? At any rate if it has been driven out in one form, it has returned in a worse. Some are old-fashioned enough to prefer plain, strong virtues and vices to those refinements which pass by the name among a certain portion of God's creatures. If such antiquated people are alive to-day, they may get some satisfaction out of the rough and tumble life of the hills.

For the place is still unspoiled, still much as it was to Walter Scott and to the Ettrick Shepherd, when they wandered over its moors, drank at its ale-houses, and slept in its homes. Christopher North came often thither, and to him succeeded John Campbell Shairp, who has written the song

which of all others most expresses its peculiar charm. It tells of the "Bush abune Traquair," a scrap of birch on the hillside above the Quair burn, and of those who once met there.

Frae mony a' but and ben,
By muirland, holm, and glen,
They cam' ane hour to spend on the green-
wood swaird.
But long ha'e lad and lass
Been lying 'neath the grass,
The green, green grass o' Traquair kirk-
yaird.

They were blest beyond compare
When they held their trysting there,
Among tha' greenest hills shone on by the
sun ;
And then they wan a rest,
The lowest and the best,
I Traquair kirkyaird when a' was dune.

But alas, we can scarcely hope for the long continuance of the old freshness and vigour of the people, the old unsullied beauty of the valley ; for the process of ruin is even now beginning. The old men are fast dying out, and the younger seek the cities, and so a new race is fast springing up which knows not the land. Water-works and the attendant horrors of brick houses and cheap shops are contemplated to fill the glens ; the shrill whistle of the engine is even now seeking to scare the curlews ; landlords are leaving their estates to dwell elsewhere, and ere long we may look to see Tweed tinged with another hue than the autumn floods. But that day is not yet, and if it ever comes it will scarce be regretted ; for by that time the valleys will be stripped of their kindly folk, the towns of their worthies ; and if the people are gone, he who once loved the land will seek elsewhere for his pleasure.

A DECAYED PROFESSION.

JUST underneath the brow of the hill, where the cart-track runs beside a small plantation, we passed an old fellow of fifty or sixty, seated on a bank with a covered basket or good-sized bundle by his side. His beard was long and ragged, his dress torn and stained with travel, his figure bent with long toil, and his whole attitude expressive of weariness. Dirty, shabby, unkempt as he was, there was a look of sharp intelligence underneath the shaggy eyebrows, and he scanned us narrowly as we passed.

You did not notice him?

There is a sort of actions which, though intrinsically good or at worst neutral in their moral quality, may take an ill colour from the circumstances in which they are done; and there is a class of men whom the whirligig of time and chance has robbed of utility and importance and reduced to the level of public contempt or reprobation. The pedlar of to-day is a person upon whom society turns an eye of indifference or rather of grave suspicion. When met in the roads he is to be ignored; if he rings the house-bell he must be ordered away; especially should the curiosity of infancy be shielded from his contaminating influence; his dog had better be shot. If, notwithstanding, he persists in his nefarious course, he shall be restrained by Act of Parliament and made to pay tax for his folly. At best he is an anachronism and an absurdity. And yet in this shabby, threadbare, sometimes cringing vagabond the world may recognise, if it will, the author of much of its boasted civilisation and refinement, the instrument, if not the arbiter, of

some of the greatest changes that can pass over the life and thought of man. Commerce, seated on her splendid throne, whose ends are served by toiling millions in every land, whose beckoning signal is attended by the armies and navies of the earth, and the right ordering of whose affairs occupies some of the deepest brains among statesmen and philosophers, may vail bonnet before the itinerant pedlar, and acknowledge in this apparently insignificant tatterdemalion the original of all her greatness.

An ingenious friend once defended the pig as the primal source of human refinement. Accident alone has given the above contention a similar air of paradox; the accident of language on the one hand, the accident of history and the writing of history on the other. The antiquity and universality of the pedlar's calling has been obscured by a name given him in days when that calling had lost much of its importance, a name whose etymology, though still uncertain, unduly specifies or belittles it. Modern philology dismisses with a smile Johnson's explanation of a contraction from "petty dealer," or the more picturesque derivation from *pied pouldreux*, and observes that the word came probably with Danes or Norsemen into England and has its origin in the *ped* or *panier* in which fish was brought to market in Norfolk, while the *peddir* (pedlar) of Lowland Scotch is equally of Scandinavian origin. *Peddar* (spelt *peoddare*) is found in the general sense of a small hawker in the ANCREN RIWLE that is, before 1237; and *pedler*, or *pedlar*, is probably formed from *peddle*, an

unrecorded diminutive of *ped*. But the point to observe is that all these derivations, right or wrong, either unduly narrow his calling or emphasise its hardship and insignificance. He is dowered with a name that unfairly depreciates him at the outset.

Nor has the historian been more kind to him; as historian, indeed, it was generally out of his power. History has not been slow to recognise the importance of trade in the development of nations, and to show how the peaceful operations of commerce are often the precursors of military conquest or at least of political dominion. But history does not go back far enough. When the historian speaks of trade he conceives of it on a large scale, as an affair of ships and caravans, and neglects its humble origin in the periodic fair and the itinerant pedlar. Of these first beginnings history is, of necessity, silent. But from sociology we learn that the function of the distribution of goods must have appeared soon after the emergence of mankind from the savage into the tribal state; its appearance, that is, must have long preceded the capacity to make a record at all. The earliest commercial relations between tribe and tribe, or between scattered members of the same tribe, seem to have taken the form of meetings for purposes of barter, of fairs or markets in fact, such as were observed in modern times among the Sandwich and Fiji Islanders, and in a more frequent and developed form among the semi-civilised races of Africa, for instance among those on the Lower Niger. The delegation to special individuals of the distributive function was but another instance of that division of labour which first rendered commerce necessary. Long before the introduction of money there would arise persons naturally better fitted

to do business than others; and to these the conduct of barter at the fair would come, by gradual and informal process, to be intrusted. Only after the rise of such a distinct trading-class would the distributive function come into play, and the itinerant trader convey the rude products of industry to those who could not attend the market. The introduction of a symbolic representation of value would extend the system of itinerant distribution, in lessening the distributor's toil. Commencing, then, a little later than the practice of holding fairs, itinerant trading must have developed concurrently with it, and have combined with the needs of military communication to maintain that permanent system of paths or roads, through forest and marshland, over moor and mountain, which is among the first conditions of civilised life. The function at first discharged by individuals and on a humble scale would eventually develop into transactions between province and province, coast and coast, of which the historian may find record, direct or indirect, and may take note; but in every country the internal trade at least must for a long time have been carried on by persons travelling on foot or horseback from place to place.

That we hear nothing of such trade in the Homeric age is not surprising. It is maritime Greece of, and for, which the poet sings. Thucydides's conjecture as to the barbarism of the Greeks of that period is confirmed by the details he gives of the condition of the *Ætolians* and the *Ozolian Locrians* at the time even of the Peloponnesian War. There was no internal trade in that land of mountains, where communication was so difficult, and where the genial climate enabled each little city or village to supply its own necessities within the narrow circle of its surrounding hills.

It is to the Lydians that Herodotus attributes the origin both of coined money and of *κάπηλοι* or hucksters. But modern archaeology, with its revelations of the enormous antiquity of civilisation in the basin of the Tigris and the Euphrates, and the claim of an antiquity not less remote for that of Egypt, India, perhaps of China,—of every country, in fact, where mighty rivers and flat alluvial plains made intercourse easy—may well make us smile at Herodotus's cautious limitation, “the first of whom we have any knowledge.” But though the part first played by the pedlar in the civilisation of mankind is still shrouded in the mist which hangs over the dawn of history, we may gather something of his importance from observing his operation in more recent times, in countries whose advance has been slow or long delayed, as in the Scottish Highlands or in South America, and also from the persistence of the type through century after century of civilised life.

For though throughout his history the pedlar has been sowing the dragon's teeth, he still maintains unequal combat with the bristling crop they have produced. The impulse towards trade and the acquisition of property which he fostered was certain in time to operate in a sense unfavourable to himself. From the moment when, in any locality, increase of population and security made the fixed shop the rival of the itinerant, would trade begin to spurn the base degrees by which she ascended. Her residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways. In Saxon England, for instance, it seems probable that two early laws of Edgar,—one introducing a uniform coinage and system of weights and measures, the other forbidding the sale or purchase of anything in towns except before sworn

witnesses, the latter of which at any rate is not easily explicable,—were directly intended to favour fixed, as opposed to itinerant, trading. The pedlars, however useful, must always have been a little troublesome to the local authorities. Their attendance in great numbers at the annual fairs in these early English times gave rise to disorders which caused the removal of the fair from the immediate vicinity of the monastery or church. Here to-day and gone to-morrow they could not easily be brought to book for their offences, nor called upon to contribute directly to the well-being of the places whence they drew their profit. We may conclude that the immunities of vagrancy were counterbalanced by their growing unpopularity in the towns, and in the obvious difficulties in the way of their combination. Some approach to the latter does seem to have existed, at least in Elizabethan times. Dekker, who has no good word to say for these “tawny sun-burnt rascals,” whom he considers all alike worthy of the halter, gives some details of a common cant or lingo current among them, represents them as frequenting the same places of lodging, and as making a point of attending fairs, “though they hop thither upon one crutch,” partly to share the gains of previous pilfering, partly “to enact new warn orders for fresh stealing of cloths for the body, but especially stamps [shoes] because (being beggars) they are seldom set on horseback.”

But from that increase of wealth, security, and dignity which accrued to fixed traders by the formation in every great town of the Trade Guilds, these wandering Ishmaelites were for ever excluded. Among the numerous subdivisions of trades revealed by those accounts of the celebration of Miracle Plays which have come down to us, we find no mention of any that

can be twisted into a resemblance to that of these itinerants.

Yet their existence was far too deeply rooted in popular need to be in any danger. Whatever the development of external commerce, or the growth of fixed establishments in the towns, it was ages before the country could dispense with the itinerant vendor, a type to which in periods of lawlessness and insecurity trade would always tend to revert. It was not until the establishment of more settled government in Tudor times, that English law paid any attention to them. In the Middle Ages, says M. Jusserand, pedlars swarmed along the road, carrying to the smaller towns and villages the necessities and conveniences of life, household wares, vests, caps, gloves, musical instruments, purses, girdles, hats, cutlasses, pewter pots, &c.—all the varied stock, in fact, which they carry to-day. That their calling was not without its profits may be argued from the fact that the travelling friars, expert judges in all matters of business, did not disdain to add this to their numerous other vocations, as is proved by allusions and statements in the writings of Wyclif and Chaucer.

The utility of the pedlar throughout the whole of this period cannot be measured merely by the material comforts and conveniences which he brought with him. Consciously or not, he was one of the chief educational agencies of the time, the bearer of news, the circulator of inventions, opinions, ideas. As one who had travelled he knew more than the home-keeping folk whom he visited; as one who was bound to make himself as acceptable as possible, he was always cheerful and communicative. He appears in one of the Roxburghe Ballads (iii. 184) as the Jovial Pedlar, heralding himself wherever he came by his cry for "conyskines" and

offering in exchange the contents of his pack—

All of points and pins
With laces and braces
And other pretty things—

to the maids of Camberwell and other places, who collect the skins against his coming, while he would sell them to the leather-workers. In what is probably a later ballad (Roxburghe, iii. 656) the contents of his pack are worth £20, and he is exceedingly happy and careless. A Scotchman playing on the bagpipes, he is here the Proud Pedlar, trim and smart; and in this character, indeed, he is guilty of the most deplorable impropriety of conduct. It is painful, too, to have to admit in regard to our clients that the popular impression of a certain unscrupulousness, or, let us say, a certain joyous freedom of temperament that transcends the strict letter of the law is not unfounded. That one of the class who possesses the strongest hold on our affections reflects, among its other characteristics, the prudent temper of provision, the ready perception of utility to himself of goods which seem useless to other men. He is, his author tells us, "a snapper up of unconsidered trifles." It seems, moreover, that the usurer who personates in Langland's poem the vice of covetousness, has in his early youth been a pedlar, and has, by his own confession, served an apprenticeship in various devices which might in the harsh moralist's eyes almost amount to dishonesty.

That in spite of these little irregularities there was no attempt made to suppress them, proves how indispensable they were. If we except the doubtful case of those early statutes of Edgar already mentioned, there was no legislative action against them before the sixteenth century. Hawkers are mentioned in an uncomplimentary

sense in a statute of Henry the Eighth; and shortly before, in 1519, there is a recurrence of the old complaint of irreverence consequent on pedlars attending festivals and holidays and driving their trade in the porch or immediate neighbourhood of the church. But that they were not yet in any general sense unpopular is clear from the position assigned to a representative of the class in John Heywood's interlude, *THE FOUR PP.*, whose appearance dates probably about 1540.

A dispute between a Palmer, a Pardoner, and a Potheccary as to their relative merits and utility to mankind is interrupted by the entrance of a Pedlar who tries to do business. Asked what his pack contains, he replies :

What does thou not know that every pedlar
In all kind of trifles must be a meddler?
Specially in women's triflings :
That use we chiefly above all things.

Who liveth in love and love would win,
Even at this pack he must begin,
Wherein is right many a proper token
Of which by name part shall be spoken :
Gloves, pins, combs, glasses unspotted,
Pomades, hooks, and laces knotted ;
Brooches, rings and all manner of beads,
Laces round and flat, for women's heads.
Needles, thread, thimbles, shears and all
such knacks,
Where lovers be no such thing lacks,
Cypress, swathbands, ribbons and sleeve
laces,
Girdles, knives, purses and pincases.

He has the pedlar's proverbial cheerfulness, which remains quite unaffected by their refusal to purchase. He can spare a customer or two, and proposes some game instead. "Why," says the Potheccary, "is he so universal a genius that he can do anything?" "Let them put him to the proof," he replies ; and, in truth, at singing and what else they try he holds his own. Finally he is begged to decide the original dispute. He will be no judge,

he answers, in matters of weight such as this question of relative merit. The dispute shall be decided by their skill in a province where they are all at home, the art of lying, one in which he may himself boast some modest proficiency. The competition begins by the Potheccary calling the Pardonner an honest man. Much discussion follows on the real mendacity of this statement, and a fresh display of skill is at length demanded. Last of the three competitors, the Palmer asserts that he never saw a woman out of patience ; and the Pedlar, who for his part is fully convinced that of every three women two, if not three, are shrews, at once pronounces him the winner. It is into the Pedlar's mouth that the author puts at the close the general moral that every man has his peculiar gift and excellence, the possession of which is no ground for despising that of another ; and appeals by him for a charitable estimate of every act and person.

But where ye doubt, the truth not knowing,
Believing the best good may be growing.
In judging the best, no harm at the least ;
In judging the worst, no good at the best.

The qualities here exhibited would earn the pedlar a deserved popularity, and Autolycus is evidence sufficient that he had not lost it in 1610. But his palmy days were over. Long before this a law of Edward the Sixth declared him "more hurtful than necessary to the Commonwealth of this realm," and restrained him from travelling without licence from two Justices of the Peace in that district. It was followed by his inclusion in an equally discourteous statute of Elizabeth, called "An Act for the punishment of Vagabonds ;" and the effect of this legislation, or of the superfluousness which induced it, is seen in another of the Roxburgh Ballads (ii 404), entitled *THE SORROWFUL LAMENTATION OF THE PEDLARS AND PETTY*

CHAPMEN FOR THE HARDNESS OF THE TIMES AND THE DECAY OF TRADES. It dates probably from the early years of the seventeenth century (the figure in the woodcut wears a small ruff) and appeals pitifully for groat or tester to help the poor pedlar to a new licence. This is a terrible descent from the gay, careless creature we have known hitherto. Contemptuous reference to them by men of letters is frequent enough from a time long anterior. Such is found in Foxe's **BOOK OF MARTYRS** (1555), in Hakluyt's **NAVIGATIONS, VOYAGES, AND DISCOVERIES** (1589), in Hall's **SATIRES** (1597) and later works, in Overbury's **CHARACTERS** (1614), in Milton's **OF REFORMATION IN ENGLAND** (1641), and in Swift. Finally the **FRENCH ENCYCLOPÉDIA** dismisses the *mercerot* in 1784 with magnificent indifference: "A name applied to those petty dealers who offer goods for sale at village fairs, and to those who carry bundles or packs of small finery about the country on their backs, or, in the streets of Paris, little baskets hung from their necks and filled with combs, pocket-knives, whistles, and other such small wares, and cheap toys for children."

It is possible that their utility and profit lasted longer on the Continent. The earliest known work on vagrancy is the **LIBER VAGATORUM**, compiled shortly after 1509 by an unknown author, but founded perhaps on those reports taken down by Johann Knebel, chaplain of Basle, of the trials at that place of a great number of vagabonds and mendicants in 1475. The book was one which Luther turned for a moment from the heat of controversy to edit, with an economy of editorial comment of which the secret has since been lost; and it is remarkable that among the various classes of vagrants which it enumerates there is nothing that can be interpreted of the itinerant

salesman except the very last paragraph, which runs thus: "Item, there is yet another sort among the land strollers. These are the *tinkers* who travel about the country. They have women who go before them and sing and play; some go about full of mischief, and if thou givest them nothing one of them mayhap will break a hole in thy kettle with a stick or a knife to give work to a multitude of others."

Similarly of the thirty-eight chapters of **LE VAGABOND**, the translation made with slight additions in 1644 by Des Fontaines from **IL VAGABONDO** of Giacinto Nobili, only two are concerned with dealers in any sort of goods; the fifteenth, which is devoted to those who sell saffron to the ignorant at an exorbitant price, and the eighteenth which describes *des Changeurs* who barter false jewellery and gold for good clothes, exhibiting first some genuine articles and substituting false ones at the moment of exchange. Of the ordinary *mercelot* (or *mercerot*, to use the more modern form,) the book says no word; yet perhaps these distinctly marked species are sufficiently representative of the genus. He must still have flourished wherever there was an absence of fixed local trade. In Poland, for example, where there were no manufactures, trade remained for ages entirely in the hands of travelling chapmen. In the time of Charles the Second there were no less than fifty-three thousand Scotchmen so engaged in that country. Sir John Denham, in some humorous doggerel, records the result of a journey he took with Lord Croft into Poland before the Restoration, to levy contributions to the royal necessities; on which occasion the wriggling of the Scotch merchants did not enable them to escape mulcting to the tune of £10,000 collected by permission of the Diet from every tenth man.

Even at the time when the aforesaid description in the *ENCYCLOPÆDIA* was written, and later than that, the pedlar preserved his importance undiminished in certain countries. The connection between the public estimation of his trade and the amount of profit to be drawn from it is clearly shown in the case of Spanish and Portuguese America about the beginning of this century. The decayed gentility of the most punctilious nation in Europe made no scruple of sending its sons across the Atlantic to repair by itinerant trade the family fortunes, or at least to secure their own. Pedlars were then the sole distributors of European commodities through South America. They met with free hospitality and assistance from the Indians, and a cordial welcome everywhere. Making Panama their base, they went by sea to Payta, and travelled thence overland through Caximalia or Truxillo to Lima, whence they would return by sea to Panama, and so round again. In Koster's *TRAVELS IN BRAZIL* (1816) we hear of the speedy doubling of the population of one village, Mamanguape, because its situation made it a convenient station between Guiana and Rio Grande for the travelling pedlars, who are described as the great instruments of civilisation, of advance in material comfort and moral refinement, and as a useful, industrious, and generally honest set of men. The mode of trade was generally the primitive one of barter; and, though it was sometimes a year before the property could be turned over, the profits amounted to two or three hundred per cent. Bolingbroke's *VOYAGE TO THE DEMERARY* (1808) gives similar testimony to the important services rendered by the itinerant storekeepers in Guiana, and to the cordial welcome they everywhere received.

In the Scottish Highlands, again, the profession was long held in high

repute. Robert Heron, a miscellaneous writer of the last century who lived at, or near Perth, tells us that much of the prosperity of that town was due to the capital accumulated by its inhabitants in the pursuit of the pedlar's calling through those parts of the Highlands that were destitute of market-towns. "The chapman," he says, "was always entertained with the best fare and free hospitality, and had besides the advantage of selling his goods at his own price. It is not more than twenty or thirty years [he is writing in 1793] since a young man going from any part of Scotland to England on purpose to carry the pack was considered as going to lead the life and acquire the fortune of a gentleman," and on his return some twenty years later did in fact take rank as such. He computes that most of the smaller gentry, those whose position and rank did not descend to them from times long past, owed their estates and influence to this trade. Mr. Heron is an ingenious gentleman, and we might possibly suspect him of a little covert satire on his canny and frugal neighbours, were we not forbidden by the obvious sincerity of the following eulogy. After showing, as we have already done, how much of material civilisation is due to this class of man, he proceeds to maintain that in their personal manners they contribute much to the refinement of those among whom they travel. "Their dealings form them to great quickness of wit and acuteness of judgment. Having constant occasion to recommend themselves and their goods, they acquire habits of the most obliging attention and the most insinuating address. As, in their peregrinations, they have opportunity of contemplating the manners of various men and various cities, they become eminently skilled in the knowledge of the world. As they wander, each

alone, through thinly inhabited districts, they form habits of reflection and sublime contemplation," and thus they act as "mirrors of fashion" and "censors of manners" to those they visit. This must, one would think, be melancholy reading to the present representatives of the class. With difficulty can one conceive the mirror of fashion accepting an old pair of trousers, or the censor of manners submitting his character to the vulgar judgment of a policeman.

There is a remarkable coincidence, if nothing more, between this passage and certain parts of *THE EXCURSION*. The chief character in that poem, or rather the person of widest intellectual range and most philosophic attitude, is a retired Scotch pedlar, who has plied his vocation, apparently, in the English lake-district towards the close of the last century.

An irksome drudgery seems it to plod on,
Through hot and dusty ways, or pelting storm,
A vagrant merchant under a heavy load,
Bent as he moves, and needing frequent rest ;
Yet do such travellers find their own delight ;
And their hard service, deemed debasing now,
Gained merited respect in simpler times ;
When squire and priest, and they who round them dwelt
In rustic sequestration—all dependent
Upon the pedlar's toil—supplied their wants,
Or pleased their fancies with the wares he brought.
Not ignorant was the youth that still no few
Of his adventurous countrymen were led
By perseverance in this track of life
To competence and ease ; to him it offered Attractions manifold.

Later in the poem the Solitary institutes a bold comparison between this profession and that of knighthood; but the Wanderer sadly dismisses the parallel, and pronounces in one of the poem's best passages,

from which we can only give a line or two, the doom of the pedlar through the development of commerce.

With fruitless pains
Might one like me now visit many a tract
Which, in his youth, he trod and trod again,
A lone pedestrian with a scanty freight,
Wished-for, or welcome, whereso'er he came,
Among the tenantry of thorpe and vill ;
Or straggling burgh, of ancient charter proud,
And dignified by battlements and towers
Of some stern castle, mouldering on the brow
Of a green hill or bank of rugged stream.
The footpath faintly marked, the horse-track wild,
And formidable length of plashy lane,
(Prized avenues ere others had been shaped
Or easier links connecting place with place)
Have vanished,—swallowed up by stately roads,
Easy and bold, that penetrate the gloom
Of Britain's farthest glens. The Earth has lent

Her waters, Air her breezes ; and the sail
Of traffic glides with ceaseless intercourse,
Glistening along the low and woody dale.

It is even so. The paths, which his feet were, perhaps, the first to wear, have become roads ; and the intercourse which he was the earliest to foster has grown into a commerce which chokes his petty trade.

The same law of social progress which brought him into being has relegated the pedlar for ever to a wholly subordinate position in the social scale. He represents a stage, the farthest possible advance of the social organism in one limited direction, a case of arrested development. Himself the product of man's earliest effort after co-operation and division of labour, he is doomed to obscurity and probably to final extinction by the fresh application of those very principles. In an age of small things he was all important ; in an age of gigantic enterprise and organisation on the hugest scale his petty function has become superfluous and ridiculous to all but the poorest, the loneliest,

the least intelligent. The pioneer of civilisation wherever he went, he is now on the point of being swallowed up by its advancing tide. Only where advance was retarded by the conditions of climate or geography, where political oppression or a decay of national energy choked commercial enterprise, has he been able to retain repute and custom ; and his survival in the social world is almost as pathetic as that of the anthropoid ape in the sphere of biology. Like the ape, he is an object of contempt or dislike to those wealthier traders in whose evolution he formed an essential stage ; and should he, being still partially arboreal in his habits, seek by untoward chance the sheltering Grove of Westbourne, one can imagine him gazing at a well-known emporium with the same dim wonderment and puzzled sense of injustice with which the ape must regard the being who so much resembles and so far surpasses him.

One limited sphere, perhaps, is yet open to him. Just as the monkey is put into a cage and ticketed to make sport for a crowd, so may the pedlar enjoy a St. Martin's summer of importance and consideration as a property in art. For, in spite of his eye to business, romance is as the garment wherewith he has been ever clothed. In an age when poetry was passing away from the life of knight and burgher, the ranks of vagabondism were recruited by hundreds who still hoped to find it there. A Ulysses for travel, words, and wits ; an evening paper for stories true and false ; the associate of contraband trade and daring doings ; the confidant of every village wife ; the ally, in virtue of his pack, of every lad who loved a lass ; alternately the bugbear and the delight of childhood—how should he now escape this last destiny ? The caged monkey tickles us with his gravity and his daring tricks, as he snatches and ad-

justs to his own snub nose the glasses of the old gentleman who was investigating him ; and honest Bob Jakin shall have our laughter and our sympathy as he turns the tables on sharp Aunt Glegg and teaches that matron the width of his thumb.

Yes, this is the true vocation for thee now, poor monument of a faded greatness, relic of a primeval past,—to stir the jaded imagination of modern men and form a picturesque accessory to a drama of the fancy. In the real world thy function is almost gone. And yet, is it gone, so long as to us toilworn mortals, sentient of

the fierce confederate storm
Of sorrow barricadoed evermore
Within the walls of cities—

thou canst bring back, as thou dost,
the sounds and scents and sights we
love and lack,—the taste

of Flora and the country green,
Dance and Provençal song and sun-burnt
mirth—

memories of summer eves heavy with the odorous breath of fruit and flower, of winter nights when the great vault sparkled clear and keen above our heads ; pictures of forest nook and cottage porch ; the sound of bee, and carolling bird, and the dashing of the village weir ; murmurs and scents from sea-beat cliff and thymy down, and airs of cool Spercheius ? All this thou dost for us, with small profit, if with small labour to thyself ; and for all this we are duly grateful. Nay, more ; we hail thee brother in the love of wandering, in the impatience of fixed duty and restraint, in the intolerance of a single roof. And in respect of that our famous pair of old boots, the staff of many winters, which now in their advanced maturity we were minded to have clouted and to use yet again, they shall be thine instead, old friend, at thy next coming. Nay, perchance we will have them clouted for thee ere thou comest.

THE AMEER'S JUSTICE.

THERE was no happier man that day in the city of Cabul than Toorab Khan, the horse-dealer, as he rode in at the city-gate one morning in May, 1873. Eight months previously he had started for the Punjaub from Seidabad, a village between Cabul and Istaliff, with a string of horses that represented all the available capital of his father, his maternal uncle, his brother, and himself. Many and long had been the consultations held in family conclave before all the preparations for his journey had been finally completed. His uncle, Osman Khan, who had travelled many times into India, trading and horse-dealing with the family money, had broken his leg, and, thanks to the village doctor, would probably never be able to set foot in stirrup again. Surfuraz Khan, his father, was getting on in years, besides being so orthodox a Mussulman that he would not speak to a Hindoo or a Christian without spitting, a proceeding that was not calculated to facilitate trade with the infidels. Sirbulund Khan, his elder brother, was an officer in the Ameer's army, and could not be spared leave for so long a journey; besides his position in the family required that his leisure moments should be given up to the exigencies of the family feud that had been in existence for forty years, and blazed up every now and again at unexpected intervals. So it fell to Toorab Khan to look after the family fortunes in distant lands.

Carefully and laboriously all through the summer was the stock-in-trade collected; not a single horse was

bought without prolonged haggling, nor until it was quite certain that the possessor would not abate another farthing of the price. Then followed long family discussions on the value of each horse, how much was to be asked for it, and what was the least to be taken for it, till the selling price of each was fixed. After which Osman Khan gave Toorab a private recipe for condition-balls, which was on no account to be communicated to anybody, together with much sage advice as to the sale of the horses: how the gray Turkoman horse, with curbed hocks, must be ridden as little as possible; how the bay Herati horse, with the blood-like head, must be picketed always at the end of the line, where he would be likeliest to catch the eye; how too high a price must not be asked at first of the *Angrez Sahibs*¹ who generally disliked haggling, and rarely reopened negotiations after they had once failed to come to terms. Then, as the time for departure drew nigh, a family feast was convened to which the village *moollah*² was invited, and at which a fat-tailed sheep with rice and raisins and pistachio nuts was served up, while everybody present belaboured Toorab with advice on every conceivable subject. He must not go among the *Lallkoortis*³ who fear neither God nor man, and who have no money; he must avoid trouble with the police, and be ready to quiet them with rupees if any difficulty arose; he must not be cheated by the Hindoos, those

¹ *Angrez Sahibs*, Englishmen.

² *Mollah*, priest.

³ *Lallkoortis*, red-coats.

sons of burned fathers ; he must not forget about drugging the vicious Wazeeri horse with the wall eye, or about the cloth and muslin and chintz that he was to buy ; he must not allow himself to be beguiled from Islam by the missionaries, but must speak them fair as being men of the Book ; he must buy plenty of percussion-caps, and conceal them in bales of cloth ; and, finally, he must turn northwards after the *Nauroz*,¹ whether he had sold all his horses or not. After which the moollah bound a charm on his arm to guard him against the evil influences of goblins and fairies, and declaring the moment to be propitious for a start, Toorab mounted his nag amidst the discharge of guns, and shrill cries from the women, " May God go with you ! may your steps be prosperous ! " and joined his caravan that had already encamped two miles away, ready to start before daylight on the following morning. And so, full of youthful elation and self-importance, Toorab Khan set forth on his first independent trading-venture.

Everything went prosperously with him from the beginning. The Ameer's *darogah*, who levied the export-duty on horses, did not delay him more than a day, and was satisfied with a moderate present for himself ; the Khyber was passed without adventure, and before he had been a week in Peshawur he had sold a horse at a good profit. At Rawal-pindi and Lahore he found purchasers, and by the time he reached Umritsur he had already made a good sum of money. This was judiciously invested in broadcloth and flannel, not forgetting the percussion-caps, and sent back to Seidabad with some of the grooms whose services were no longer required. Then travelling on by Delhi, Ulwur,

and Jeypore, selling a horse here and there, Toorab Khan felt that his journey had indeed been a fortunate one as he knelt at the sacred shrine of Mohin-oo-deen Chisti at Ajmere, to which in the fulness of his heart he made a most liberal offering. Thence, turning eastward, he travelled by Boondi, Kerowlie, and Gwalior till he reached Bolundshur, whence a second consignment of chintz, muslin, looking-glasses, knives, and percussion-caps was despatched to Seidabad. By the time Hurdwar was reached he had only two horses left, and these speedily found customers. It was with a light heart, therefore, that Toorab rode into Cabul with two hundred and thirty golden *ashruffees*¹ sewn in a leather belt round his waist, and half-a-dozen rupees tied up in the corner of his turban for expenses by the way.

Dismounting at the caravanserai and leaving his followers to their own devices, he was wandering toward the Chandoor quarter, when catching sight of a mosque he bethought himself that, as a true believer who had been favoured by fortune, it behoved him to offer up a prayer of thanksgiving for his safe return from the land of the infidel. The mosque stood in a large courtyard shaded with plane trees, and when he entered through the outer door Toorab found himself alone there. Within the mosque, seated at the foot of the pulpit, was a single moollah engaged in reading the Koran, who took no notice of him. Proceeding to the cistern in the corner of the courtyard, he divested himself of his upper garments, placing the precious belt in a convenient niche in the wall, and made his ablutions ; after which he knelt and prayed. From time to time he glanced toward the moollah who continued to chant monotonously in a low voice the

¹ *Nauroz*, New Year's Day ; the vernal equinox.

¹ *Ashruffee*, a gold coin, equivalent to the *mohur* and analogous to our old English *noble*.

contents of the holy book, swaying his body backward and forward, apparently lost to all sense of surroundings. Resuming his clothes Toorab left the mosque, and before long found himself at the cook-shop of his old acquaintance Abdoolah Khan, where, after many greetings, he sat down to an unctuous fry of sheep's liver and fat, impaled in alternate slices on a wooden skewer. Hardly had he put one of the savoury morsels into his mouth, when, clapping his hand to his waist, he became aware that the belt, the precious belt, had been left behind at the mosque. Throwing down the skewer, and without waiting to wipe his hands, he ran like one possessed back to the mosque. As before, there was nobody in the place except the impassive moollah who was still reading the blessed book. With a heartfelt exclamation of relief Toorab ran to the niche, but found it empty; the belt was gone! Hurriedly searching on the ground to see if it had dropped, he burst into loud lamentations, and dashing his turban from his head, he mingled curses on his evil fortune with invocations to the blessed Imaums if they would only restore him his money. Then, catching up his turban, he strode bareheaded up to the moollah who looked up as he approached.

"Tell me, oh Flower of the Faith," he exclaimed brusquely, without giving the customary salutation, "what man has been here since I left?"

"What do I know?" replied the moollah. "Many men come and go; it is nothing to me."

"Yes, it is so," said Toorab, moderating his tone, and grasping the moollah's skirt, as he spoke; "but help me, oh Syud, or I am undone. Listen; I came here to bathe and pray about an hour ago, and left my money in the niche by the cistern, and now it is gone."

"*Allah Kerim*, God is merciful! why make so much noise about a few rupees? What saith the blessed Khojah Shums-oo-deen Iraki who now enjoys the mercy of God? Gold is as clay, and silver as stone; but the true faith is a jewel more precious than rubies of Badakhshan."

"A few rupees! *Allah il Allah!* There were three hundred golden ashruffees. *Ahi, ahi!*"

"*Walla Billah!* but this is serious," said the moollah without moving. "This must be looked to; a reward must be offered."

"Intercede for me, oh Syud. I will give two ashruffees to him who shall restore me the belt and the money."

"Two ashruffees to regain three hundred! Are ashruffees or honest men so plentiful that you expect to get back the belt for such a pitiful reward? Go! I have enough to do without looking for the ashruffees of such a miserly fellow. Go!"

"Nay, oh Syud, be not angry. Verily thou must have seen the man who took the belt; I will give five ashruffees to him who restores it to me. Is not that enough? Well then, I will give ten, yes, ten ashruffees, to the man who brings back my money."

"Now thou speakest more like a wise man; but ten is not enough. Tie on thy turban and bear not thyself like a madman. Ten ashruffees must be given to the man who restores thy belt, and ten more for the use of the musjid in whose grounds it was lost."

"*Al-aman, Al-aman!* Mercy, mercy! Twenty ashruffees! How can I give twenty ashruffees?" And Toorab paced up and down the enclosure like a wild creature, as the moollah calmly resumed his studies. This wretch of a priest evidently knew who had got his belt, and would probably share in the plunder. He was in despair. However there was no help for it

but to agree to the terms ; so, approaching the moollah again, he said, with a deep sigh : " *Kabool, I agree ;* but show me the man without delay, for my heart is like ice with anxiety."

" Patience ; first describe the belt ; was it of cloth or of leather ? "

" Of leather, of red goat's leather, such as is made at Akbarabad in Hindostan. Delay not, oh Syud ! "

" See then, my brother, God has restored thy money to thee," and the moollah, opening the box that served him for a reading-desk, produced the missing belt.

With eager hands Toorab snatched the belt, and, sitting down, ripped open one end of it and emptied the contents on to the ground. He then proceeded to count the coins while the moollah looked on with avaricious eyes. Two hundred and twenty-eight ! Two hundred and twenty-nine ! Two hundred and thirty ! They were all there, not a coin was missing. Quickly slipping the coins back into the belt he fastened it tightly round his waist next the skin, and above the outer garments wound his blue check cummerbund. Then rising he said : " Blessings on thee, oh moollah ! Thou hast saved me from ruin. This money belongs to my father ; when I return to Cabul I will reward thee ; " and he strode towards the gate. But the moollah was not to be trifled with.

" *Allah Talah !* By God ! whose dog am I that I should eat dirt ? " and he rose and followed him ; but a slash from Toorab's long knife was not to be risked, and he did not attempt to stop him till they reached the open street, when he raised his voice. " Help, sons of Islam ! I am robbed ! The Faith is attacked ! This Kafir has robbed me and the holy musjid likewise ! "

When a Mussulman gets involved in a quarrel, and loses his temper, his first impulse is to challenge the

orthodoxy of his adversary, and to get public opinion on his own side by protesting that it is a matter of religion, and that Islam is endangered in his person. And so the moollah continued to bawl out accusations of infidelity and theft against Toorab, till, as his neighbours and acquaintances gathered to his call, he snatched Toorab's turban from his head. With a bitter oath Toorab turned on the moollah, and, had they been alone together, it would have gone hard with the latter ; but prudence counselled Toorab to keep his knife in its sheath. He contented himself with seizing his turban in the moollah's hand, while in a blustering tone he protested that if there was any Kafir in the case it was the moollah, and that he himself had been robbed.

" Listen," said the moollah to the bystanders. " This unsainted dog lost a belt full of gold. God only knows how such a fellow became possessed of so much ; not honestly, I'll be bound. Through the help of the blessed Prophet I found his money after much trouble, and now he refuses to give me what he promised for recovering it for him. He shall account for it before he leaves the city," and he gave another vicious tug at the end of the turban.

The expression on the faces of the crowd was not reassuring, and Toorab looked in vain among them for a face that was known to him. But assuming a conciliatory tone he said : " Patience, oh friends, I am a true believer like yourselves. This money belongs to my father, Surfuraz Khan of Seidabad. I left it by the cistern while bathing, and forgot it, and the moollah restored it to me. I have paid him for doing so ; and now he faithlessly tries to extort more from me by calling me a Kafir and saying I stole the money."

" He lies, by my father's beard he

lies!" roared the moollah. "His father indeed, who knows in what jackal's earth to look for him? He has probably lost his hand for stealing and is obliged to send out this unsainted one to thieve for him. Surfuraz Khan of Seidabad indeed; who ever heard of Surfuraz Khan of Seidabad?"

The challenge was unexpectedly taken up. Two stalwart sepoys forced their way through the crowd and addressed Toorab: "Sirbulund Khan, son of Surfuraz Khan of Seidabad, is our comrade; is he thy brother?"

"Allah be praised! he is my own brother, born of the same father and the same mother. Stand by me, comrades; these unsainted dogs would plunder me."

At this unexpected reinforcement the crowd fell back, and the moollah relaxed his grasp of Toorab's turban; but he was not to be defeated so easily. "If he is an honest man," said he, addressing the two sepoys, "why does he refuse to pay me the reward he promised me? I will have justice: let him come to the Cazi;¹ the Cazi shall decide between us."

"You are lost if you go to the Cazi," whispered one of the sepoys in Toorab's ear; "he is an unsainted villain, and is brother to the moollah. Appeal to the Ameer; he is sitting now in the *Diwan-i-Am*.²

"Why should I go to the Cazi, who is of the same litter as thyself?" roared Toorab Khan in his turn, with regained confidence. "The yellow dog and the jackal are brothers"—and a laugh went through the crowd. "Come to the Ameer, if thou wantest justice."

"It is a bargain, I agree; the Ameer shall decide," replied the moollah, though visibly disconcerted;

but in the face of Toorab's newly found friends he dared not refuse. If there was a thing in Cabul upon which it was dangerous to hazard an opinion it was as to the decision a cazi was likely to give in a case involving the possession of ready money; but uncertainties of this kind become converted into the wildest of lottery-chances when such cases were heard by the Ameer. The influence of relatives might be brought to bear on a cazi; or, as a last resource, a judicious sacrifice of a portion of the property in dispute might secure a fairly equitable decision as to the remainder. A cazi was, moreover, restrained in some degree by the fear of public opinion, from giving decisions of too manifestly unjust a nature. But the Ameer's judgments were far more startling and unexpected. Not unfrequently both suitor and defendant went away sorrowing; and the possessor of the strongest and simplest case might chance to find all subtle distinctions between civil and criminal jurisprudence brushed aside, and himself subjected to condign punishment on some irrelevant point that had come out in the course of the proceedings. So it was not without misgivings on both sides that Toorab and the moollah found themselves hurried by the idle crowd toward the Bala Hissar, where the Ameer was to be found.

Every day, from early morning till noon, the Ameer Shere Ali sat in the *Diwan-i-Am* where all might have access to him. Here, surrounded by attendant sirdars and secretaries, he received reports, issued orders, dictated letters, discussed the affairs of his kingdom, and gossiped with those who presented themselves. From time to time idlers lounged in and listened to what went on, or joined in the discussion without ceremony; and many a plain truth was spoken to the Ameer by fearless tribesmen; for an Afghan

¹ *Cazi*, or *Kadi*, a judge.

² *Diwan-i-Am*, Place of Public Audience.

pays little respect to his superiors, and an Afghan chief cannot hedge himself round with forms and ceremonies like other princes.

Passing through two courtyards filled with lounging soldiers and picketed horses, Toorab and his companions entered a smaller courtyard. At the end of it, in a broad open verandah raised three or four feet above the outer level, sat the Ameer, a stout, stern-looking man, plainly dressed in a long tightly-fitting coat of brown cloth edged with black lamskin, and a high Persian cap of black lamskin on his head. Round his waist was a sword-belt of broad gold lace, and he held his sheathed sword in his hand as he sat in his chair. In front of him, in the courtyard, ran a wooden railing about three feet from the raised verandah, inside of which stood two soldiers with loaded rifles. Common persons to whom the Ameer gave audience were allowed to stand at the railing, but no man durst pass it under pain of being instantly shot down. As Toorab and the mollah approached the Ameer was listening to a long-haired *pouwindah*,¹ who had lately returned from the south and was relating his experiences.

"And so you saw the new *Lat Sahib*² in Calcutta; what was he doing?"

"Yes, I saw the new *Lat*; he was riding the same horse that the old *Lat* used to ride. He is not a big man like the old *Lat*, but he is not a small man either. Like many of the Christians he had no beard, but he had large eyes that looked every man in the face, like a man who is not afraid. He was reviewing the *Bullumteers*,³ a new kind of soldiers that the Angrez have got now."

¹ *Pouwindah*, a travelling-merchant.

² *Lat Sahib*, the Lord Sahib; i.e. the Viceroy.

³ *Bullumteers*, the Volunteers.

"I have heard of the Bullumteers. Say, now, what were they like? Were there many of them?"

"In Calcutta I saw about ten thousand; but there are Bullumteers in all cities—in Lucknow, in Allahabad, everywhere. They live in their own houses, not in barracks like other soldiers, and they get no pay."

"No pay! What lie is this? How can they live without pay? Do they plunder the country for a livelihood?"

"Not so; it is no lie. They are traders and shopkeepers, tailors, barbers, money-changers, clerks, and such like. I asked many of those who bought my grapes, and they all told me they got no pay. It is a *hookum*¹ of the Queen that every ten houses shall furnish one Bullumteer to fight the Russ."

"Wah, this is a great *hikmut*!² By Allah I will have Bullumteers too." Then turning to a secretary he went on: "Write now to the Hakim of Maimena, who is always asking for more troops, to issue an order for every five houses to furnish one Bullumteer, and that they are to get no pay like the Bullumteers in Hindostan." Then, dismissing the merchant, the Ameer looked towards the mollah and Toorab, who understood that their turn for a hearing had arrived. At once both of them raised their voices and began to relate their grievances simultaneously.

"Peace, you dogs! How can I hear what you say if you both yelp together? First say what you have to say," motioning to Toorab.

"My Lord, I am the son of Surfuraz Khan of Seidabad; I have been away in Hindostan selling horses, and returned only this morning. I went into the mosque to pray, leaving my belt full of money in a niche in the

¹ *Hookum*, an order.

² *Hikmut*, mystery.

wall of the cistern. When I went back I found that this moollah had taken and hidden it. He refused to give it back till I promised to reward him. By Allah, He deserved no reward; but he insisted, so I gave him what he demanded, and took my belt from him. Now the rogue asks for more; who can satisfy a moollah?"

"Where is the belt now?" asked the Ameer.

"My Lord, it is here," said Toorab touching his waist.

"Show it to me," persisted the Ameer, and with reluctant fingers Toorab unfastened the belt which was promptly handed up to the Ameer. "Now, moollah, what have you to say?"

"My Lord, it is a lie. This faithless one came to me like a mad fool, and promised me twenty ashruffees if I could find his belt for him. I searched everywhere, and found his belt; but when I restored it to him he refused to give me anything. Surely he is a thief. He has stolen the money, and now he wishes to rob me."

"Why do you not pay the moollah what you promised him?" asked the Ameer of Toorab.

"My Lord, I have paid him; that is, he paid himself before giving me back the belt. There were two hundred and fifty ashruffees in the belt when I placed it in the niche; now there are only two hundred and thirty."

The coins were promptly turned out of the belt and counted, and sure enough there were but two hundred

and thirty. Toorab's eyes sparkled as the Ameer turned with a frown to the moollah.

"The rogue, the Kafir, the *shaitan*¹! He lies, my Lord; he is the father of lies. There were never two hundred and fifty ashruffees in the belt," shouted the moollah. "Lo now, replace them in the belt, and see if there be room for two hundred and fifty." This was quickly done, and the stitching of the belt showed that not a single additional coin could have been packed in.

"Enough, moollah, you have spoken the truth; here, take your twenty ashruffees and go." Then turning to Toorab, "Be off with you."

"But my money, my Lord; at least give me the remainder of my money," said the disconcerted Toorab.

"Thy money! What dirt hast thou eaten, thou dishonest dog? This is not thy money. Thou saidest thy belt had two hundred and fifty ashruffees in it. This is not thy belt; it contained only two hundred and thirty. This is some other man's belt which I will keep till the owner appears. Be off! Thou art fortunate to take both thy ears with thee. Here, take this dog and cast him forth!" And Toorab found himself seized by two stalwart guards who ran him through the courtyard to the outer gate where they flung him on his face in the mud.

There was no sadder man in Cabul that day than Toorab Khan as he rode out of the city gate towards Seidabad, lamenting his evil fortune.

¹ *Shaitan*, devil.